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THE

NEW TESTAMENT

OF OUR

LORD AND SAVIOUR

JESUS CHRIST:

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL GREEK.

WITH

ORIGINAL NOTES AND PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

BY THOMAS SCOTT,

RECTOR OF ASTON SANDFORD, BUCKS, AND CHAPLAIN TO THE LOCK HOSPITAL.

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THE NAMES AND ORDER

OF ALL THE BOOKS OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS,

WITH THE NUMBER OF THEIR CHAPTERS.

BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

GENESIS hath Chapters . . . 50	II. CHRONICLES hath Chap. 36	DANIEL hath Chapters . . . 12
EXODUS 40	EZRA 10	HOSEA 14
LEVITICUS 27	NEHEMIAH 13	JOEL 3
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INTRODUCTION

TO THE

NEW TESTAMENT.

THE Church, from the earliest antiquity, hath called this part of Scripture on which we now enter, 'The New Testament,' or, 'The New Covenant:' for the word may be translated either way, as it signifies sometimes a stipulation between two or more contracting parties; at others, the absolute appointment of a person, in those matters that are at his own disposal; and more rarely, a last Will and Testament, by which a man appoints his heirs, and the way in which the inheritance is to be obtained and enjoyed. It is called "The New Testament," in contra-distinction from "the Old Testament;" not as if the one contained only the old covenant of works, and the other the new covenant of grace; for the contrary hath already been abundantly shown: but because the New Testament gives an account of the abrogation of the old dispensation, and of the introduction of a new and better dispensation. The Mosaic law, the national covenant made with Israel, and the Levitical priesthood, formed, as it were, an edition both of the covenant of works, and of the covenant of grace: but at the coming of Christ, the end being answered, this was antiquated and abrogated; and the Christian dispensation, containing clearer light and greater encouragement, not attended with burdensome ceremonies, or clouded by types and shadows, or restricted to any place or nation, formed a new edition of the covenant of grace; yet so, that unbelievers continue, as of old, under the ministration of death, the covenant of works. This dispensation therefore is compendiously called 'The New Covenant,' or, 'The New Testament,' with reference to the death of Christ, the Testator.

The history, contained in this part of Scripture, is an exact counterpart of the prophecies, promises, and types of the Old Testament, in respect of its grand Subject, the great Redeemer, and his kingdom and salvation. An enlightened student of the Old Testament, before the coming of Christ, must have expected exactly such events, and such changes in the outward state of the Church, as the New Testament records: and the sole reason why the Jews in general, and the apostles in particular for a time, did not expect such events and changes, is this: "their understandings were not opened to understand the Scriptures." A careful and constant examination of the sacred volume, diligently comparing one part with another, renders this clear and manifest: inasmuch that it is possible, and perhaps not very difficult, to form a connected narrative of all the grand outlines of the history contained in the New Testament, from the very words of the Old Testament. The person of the Redeemer, as Emmanuel; his descent in human nature from Judah and from David, when the family was reduced to poverty and obscurity; his miraculous conception; his birth at Bethlehem; his character, miracles, and doctrine; the reception given him by his countrymen; the unparalleled contempt and enmity shown him; the manner, and all the circumstances of his death and burial, even to minute particulars; the end and design of his sufferings and death, his resurrection, and ascension, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit; the conversion of vast multitudes; the obstinate unbelief and opposition of the Jewish nation; the tremendous judgments of God on them, for these crimes; the abrogation of the ceremonial law; the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple; the calling of the Gentiles; the glorious triumphs of Christianity, and indeed the state of the Church, through all intervening ages till the consummation of all things, might be related in the words of the prophets, only by substituting in a few instances the past for the future tense. To so astonishing a degree do the two divisions of the sacred Scriptures confirm and illustrate each other! And let it here be observed in general, that the writers of the New Testament always quote and refer to the several books of the Old, as divinely

inspired, as "the oracles of God," as "the Scripture that cannot be broken;" and never, as if they supposed any part of it to be the words of uninspired men, however eminent and excellent. But the New Testament does not rest its claim to be received as a divine revelation, on the Old Testament, and the evidences by which it is confirmed. While Christ had his apostles appealed to the ancient Scriptures, and showed "that thus it was written and thus it must be;" they confirmed their instructions, and combated the prejudices of their hearers, by the most undeniable miracles, wrought in the open face of day, before vast multitudes of all characters, and challenging the investigation of the most powerful, sagacious, and inveterate of their enemies: And it is utterly unconceivable, that Christianity could have made its way in the world, by the obscure persons who propagated it, and against the immense opposition made to it, except it had been thus confirmed, beyond the possibility of any denial.

The prophecies also of our Lord and of his apostles, interspersed, as we shall see, through the books of the several writers of the New Testament, and as fulfilled through all succeeding ages, form a demonstration of its divine authority, which gathers clearness and energy by revolving centuries. A variety of other proofs, external and internal, might be mentioned; but these hints may here suffice to show, that the New-Testament stands on its own basis; and not merely on the ground of the Old Testament, as some have assumed.

The writers of the New Testament speak of themselves and of each other, as divinely inspired. (Rom. x. 14—17. xvi. 25, 26. 1 Cor. i. 21. ii. 7. 10. Eph. iii. 3—5. 1 Thes. ii. 13. 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16. 1 John iv. 6.)—If, then, any person should be inclined to think, that, provided they be regarded as wise and good men, it is not so absolutely necessary to vindicate their divine inspiration: let them first consider, whether laying a groundless claim to divine inspiration, be not such an impeachment of any writer's probity and veracity, as to render him unworthy of credit in all other things?—And again, if the writers of the New Testament were not divinely inspired, where is our standard of faith and practice? How do we know, what the doctrine of Christ was? How shall we distinguish it from all false doctrine?

The several books, which now form the New Testament, were early received by the Christian Church, as of divine authority. The greatest part of them are quoted by the most ancient Christian writers, and appealed to, as the standard of truth. A vast proportion of the New Testament might be collected from writers who lived in the first two centuries. They formed catalogues of the several books, and wrote comments on them: both the orthodox and the heretics appealed to them; lectures on several parts of them are still extant; nay, the enemies of Christianity uniformly mention them, as the authentic books of Christians. So that there is the most complete proof, that all the books, now collected in the New Testament, were received and read in the assemblies of Christians, before the end of the second century; except the epistle to the Hebrews, that of James, the second of Peter, the second and third of John, that of Jude, and the Revelation of John; and that these, or most of them, were extant, and well known, though not universally received as divinely inspired. Some reasons may be given, why the Christian Church hesitated respecting these books when they come under consideration: but this only proves that the persons concerned were cautious, even to an extreme, and therefore not likely to be imposed on by spurious predictions.

From the same tradition we, with the surest evidence of reason, may conclude that these Scriptures were handed down—uncorrupted in the substantials of faith and manners. These records being once so generally dispersed through all Christian Churches, though at a great distance from each other, from the beginning of the second century; so universally acknowledged by men of curious parts and different persuasions; being multiplied into diverse versions, almost from the beginning; being so constantly rehearsed in their assemblies; so diligently read by Christians, and so rivited in their memories, that Eusebius mentions some who had them all by heart; and lastly, so frequent in their writings, as now we have them: it must be certain from these considerations, that they were handed down to succeeding generations pure and uncorrupt. (Whitby.)

As the notion is very common, that we cannot be sure, concerning the correctness of the scriptures at present, after so many centuries; especially as learned men are frequently speaking of the different readings in manuscripts or versions; in addition to the above important quotation, the following remark may afford some satisfaction. During nearly two hundred years, our present translation of the Scriptures has been extant: and persons of various descriptions have made new translations of the whole, or of particular parts; and scarcely any writer fails to mention in one way or other, alterations which he supposes would be improvements. It may be asked, how then can unlearned persons know, that our translation may be depended on, as in general faithful and correct? Let the inquirer, however, remember, that episcopalians,

presbyterians, and independents, baptists and pædo-baptists, Calvinists and Armenians, persons who maintain eager controversies with each other, in various ways, all appeal to the same version, and in no matters of consequence object to it. This demonstrates, that the translation on the whole is just : and also, that it is impossible for any party covertly to deviate from it, while so many eager opponents are incessantly watching over one another. The same consideration proves the impossibility of the primitive Christians corrupting the sacred records, while heretics, Jews, and Pagans, stood ready, with virulence to expose every deviation ; nay, other Churches would have protested against the alterations which any Church attempted to make. In fact, if all the different readings, (most of which are of little authority,) were without exception adopted ; the rule of truth and duty would remain entirely the same : so that this is merely an artifice, by which the enemies of the Gospel perplex the minds of those, who cannot, or will not, examine the subject. ‘ Who can imagine, that God, who sent his Son to declare this doctrine, and his apostles by the assistance of the Holy Spirit to indite and speak it ; and by so many miracles confirmed it to the world, should suffer any wicked persons to corrupt it ? It is absurd to say, that God repented of his goodness and kindness to mankind, in vouchsafing the Gospel to them ; or that he maligned the good of future generations ; that he suffered wicked men to rob them of all this good intended to them by the declaration of his will !’ (Whitby.) (Note, Prov. xxii. 12.)

It should also be observed, that no other books were received by the primitive Church, as a part of divine revelation. Very many other compositions were sent forth, bearing the names of the apostles or primitive teachers : but, on careful examination, all, except those which now form the New Testament, were rejected as spurious. And this shows, with what scrupulous caution the canon of Scripture was fixed. The four Gospels were very early received, as the writings of the evangelists whose names they bear. They are mentioned distinctly by the fathers of the second century, as ‘ books well known by the name of Gospels, and as such were read by Christians, at their assemblies every Lord’s day.’ (Whitby.) Several other Gospels were published, and some gained a temporary credit ; but they are either not mentioned in the approved writings of the primitive Christians, or mentioned with disapprobation.

It is well known, that the word Gospel signifies glad tidings ; and the original word has precisely the same meaning. The inspired writers of those histories, which we call ‘ the Gospels,’ give distinct views of those things that relate to the birth, life, miracles, discourses, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; connected with some account of his forerunner John Baptist, and of his apostles and primitive disciples. Their accounts, as might have been previously supposed, vary from one another : each of them recorded more fully those particulars which most suited his purpose, or which had most affected his mind : for, the most plenary superintending inspiration did not supersede the use of the writer’s memory, judgment, and understanding, but rather served to assist, direct, and exalt them. And thus, while these variations show, that they did not write in concert, (for in that case the appearance of disagreement would certainly have been avoided,) they tend to corroborate the evidence of the divine authority of their histories : as their actual coincidence, and the easy manner in which their apparent variations may be reconciled, form a strong presumptive proof that they were under a supernatural guidance, and cannot satisfactorily be accounted for in any other way. ‘ Industry, ingenuity, and malice, have, for ages, been employed, in endeavouring to prove the evangelists inconsistent with each other : yet not a single contradiction has hitherto been proved on them. But one thing is fact. These four men have done, without appearing to have intended it, what was never performed by any author before, or since. They have drawn a perfect human character without a single flaw : they have given the history of one, whose spirit, words and actions, were in every particular, exactly what they ought to have been ! who always did the very thing that was proper, and in the best manner imaginable ; who never once deviated from the most consummate wisdom and excellency ! and who in no instance let one virtue intrench on another, but exercised all in perfect harmony and exact proportion. This challenges investigation, and sets infidelity at defiance. Either these men exceeded in genius and capacity all the writers who ever lived, or they wrote under the special guidance of divine inspiration. (Answer to Paine’s age of Reason by the author.)

THE GOSPEL

ACCORDING TO

ST. MATTHEW.

Little is known concerning the writer of this Gospel, except what he has recorded of himself. (Notes, ix. 9—13. x. 3.) He is generally supposed to have written his history about eight years after our Lord's ascension, and before any other part of the New Testament was extant. It is certain that it was published at a very early period. Many have contended, that this Gospel was written in Hebrew, and that we have only a translation of it in Greek. But learned men have satisfactorily shown, that this is a mistake; and that the apostle wrote his Gospel in Greek, as we now have it; though they seem willing to allow, that he also gave a Hebrew, or Syriac, version of it, for the use of his countrymen. The reader, who wishes to examine the subject, will find it fully discussed in Dr. Whitby's preface.

St. Matthew is supposed to be distinguished from the other evangelists by the frequency of his references to the Old Testament. He also records more of our Lord's parables than the others do: and, on the whole, seems more observant of the order, as to time, in which events occurred. He begins his history with the genealogy of Christ, in the line of Joseph the husband of Mary his mother, and relates some circumstances concerning his miraculous conception, birth, and infancy. He gives us a brief account of the ministry of John Baptist; and records the Baptism and temptation of Christ, and his entrance on his public ministry. He then proceeds with the narrative of his miracles and discourses, till at length he fully records the manner of his crucifixion, death, and burial; and, having borne witness to his glorious resurrection, and appearance to his disciples, closes his history with some most important words, which the Lord Jesus is supposed to have spoken immediately before his ascension into heaven.

The author would just observe, that where notes on parallel passages are not referred to, the reader must consult the margin. A few instances occur, in which he found that he could not divide the practical observations, so as to form convenient portions for family reading with the notes; as in the beatitudes, the Lord's prayer, and some other places; and in these the notes may be read with the text, and the practical observations at the close.

Year of the World 4000.

CHAPTER I.

The genealogy of Christ in the line of Joseph, from Abraham, and David, 1—17. His miraculous conception, by the Holy Ghost, of the virgin Mary; and the doubts of Joseph, to whom she was espoused, removed by an angel, who directs him to take her home, and to call the son born of her Jesus, 18—21. This is shown to accord with the prediction of Isaiah, 22, 23. Joseph obeys, and Jesus is born, 24, 25.

NOTES.

CHAP. I. V. 1. The book of Genesis, or, the Beginning, that is, the original of the heavens and the earth, stands first in the Old Testament; and the same word, in the Greek, introduces the history contained in the New Testament; but here it signifies the generation, or pedigree, of Him, as Man, who, as God, created all things, and at length appeared in human nature, to redeem

Year of the World 4000.

THE book of the ^a generation of Jesus Christ, ^b the son of David, ^c the son of Abraham.

2 ^d Abraham begat Isaac, and ^e Isaac begat Jacob, ^f and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren.

3 And ^g Judas begat Phares and Zarah of ^h Thamar, ⁱ and Phares begat Esrom, and Esrom begat ^k Aram,

1, 3, 4 Rev xxii. 16. — c Gen. xii. 3 xxii. 18 xxvi. 3—5 xxviii. 13, 14 Rom. iv. 13 Gal. iii. 16. — d Gen. xxi. 2, 3. Josh xxv. 2, 3. 1 Chr. i. 29 Is. ii. 2 Luke iii. 24. Acts vii. 8 Rom. ix. 7—9 Heb. xi. 11, 17, 18. — e Gen. xxv. 26 Josh xxiv. 4. 1 Chr. i. 34. Is. xli. 8 Mal. i. 2, 3 Rom. ix. 10—13. — f Gen. xxiv. 32—35 xxi. 5—20 xxv. 18—19 xvi. 8, 9. xix. 8—12 Ex. i. 2—5. 1 Chr. ii. 1, 2, 3 Luke iii. 23, 24 Acts vii. 8 Heb. xi. 14 Jud. i. 1—3. — g Gen. xxxviii. 22, 30 xlii. 12. Judah, Phares, Zarah Num. xxvi. 20, 21. 1 Chr. ii. 3, 4 ix. 4. — h Gen. xxxviii. 6, 11. 24, 26 Tamar. — i Gen. xlii. 12. Num. xxvi. 21. Ruth. iv. 18. 1 Chr. ii. 5. iv. 1. Hiram, Luke iii. 33. — k Ruth. iv. 12. 1 Chr. ii. 9. Ram.

mankind from sin and misery. This promised Saviour had been long foretold, as the son of Abraham, and of David, and therefore the inspired writer, having mentioned his name JESUS, and his office or appointment, as the CHRIST, the MESSIAH, the Anointed of God, proceeded to declare that he was the son of Abraham and of David, in order to introduce the subsequent genealogy, by which that claim would be authenticated. (Marg. Ref.)

4 And Aram begat ¹ Aminadab, and
Aminadab begat ^m Naasson, and Naasson
begat Salmon,

5 And ^a Salmon begat Booz of ^o Rachab, and ^p Booz begat Obed of Ruth, and ^q Obed begat Jesse.

21. 31 Jam. ii. 6 And ^r Jesse begat David the king,
23 Rahab. and David the king begat ^s Solomon of
Ruth i. 4 16, and David the king begat ^s Solomon of
17. 22 ii.—iv. ^s her that had been the wife of ^u Urias.
q Luke iii. 39
Ruth iv 22

1 Sam. xvi. 1. 7 And Solomon begat ^x Roboam, and
 31-13 xxvii. 12
 Jo. xx. 39, 31.
 xxii. 8. 2 Sam. Roboam begat ^y Abia, and Abia begat
 xxiii. 1. 1 Chr.
 91. 15 Ps. lxxii. ^z Asa.

20. Is. xi. 1.
Acts xiii. 22, 23. 8 And Asa begat ^a Josaphat, and Jo-
2 Sam. xii. 24, saphat begat ^b Joram, and Joram begat
26; Chr. ii. 5
xiv. 4 xxviii. 5
2 Sam. xvi. 3 26, ^c Ozias.

9 And Ozias beget ^d Joatham, and
Joatham beget ^e Achaz, and Achaz beget
^f Ezekias.

10 And Ezekias begat ^g Manasses, and Manasses begat ^h Amon, and Amon begat ⁱ Josias.

11 And * Josias begat ^k Jechonias and his brethren, ^l about the time they were carried away to Babylon:

12 And after they were brought to Babylon, ^m Jechonias begat Salathiel, ⁿ and Salathiel begat Zorobabel,

13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud, and Abiud begat Eliakim, and Eliakim begat Azor,

14 And Azor begat Sadoc, and Sadoc begat Achim, and Achim begat Ehud,

15 And Eliud begat Eleazer, and
Eleazer begat Matthan, and Matthan
begat Jacob.

16 And Jacob begat ° Joseph the husband of Mary, ° of whom was born Jesus. ° who is called Christ.

17 So all the generations, from Abraham to David, *are fourteen generations;* and from David, until the carrying away into Babylon, *are fourteen generations;* and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ *are fourteen generations.*

V. 2—17. Various difficulties have been started in respect of this genealogy : but a few general remarks may suffice to show them to be comparatively of small consequence. It is evident, that the genealogy of Joseph, and not of Mary, is given in these verses. That of Mary is traced back to Adam by St. Luke, as will be shown hereafter. Joseph was supposed by the Jews to be the father of Jesus, and he was his father in law : it was therefore proper that his descent from David should be ascertained. Probably this genealogy was copied from the public registers of the nation, which were well known ; and this may account for some omissions and variations which are found in it, on comparing it with the history of the Old Testament. The other children of Abraham are not mentioned with Isaac, nor is Esau, who was the twin-brother of Jacob, and elder than he ; for their descendants were not interested in the covenant of promise. But the children of Judah are mentioned, as their posterity constituted the chosen people of God ; and Zera, twin-brother of Phares, is inserted, because part of the tribe of Judah descended from him. The names of four women are found in it, being all remarkable characters. Tamar, of whom, by incest with her father in law, the greatest part of the tribe of Judah was descended. (*Notes, Gen. xxxviii*) Rachab, or Rahab, who seems to have been the same that had been a harlot, and an inhabitant of Jericho, but through faith was preserved from the destruction of that city, (*Note, Josh. ii. 6*) : for no other woman of that name is mentioned in Scripture. Ruth the Moabitess ; and Bathsheba, who had been the wife of Uriah, with whom David had committed adultery. This might intimate that Christ was made in the likeness of

sinful flesh, and came to save the Gentiles and the vilest of sinners. Three kings, the immediate descendants of Athaliah, by Joram the son of Jehoshaphat, viz. Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, are passed over without notice. Perhaps it was found so in the genealogies, and they that compiled them, aiming to reduce the number of genealogies from David to the captivity to fourteen, as well as that from Abraham to David, though these descendants of that wicked woman, by an unhallowed fatal marriage, might most properly be omitted. But some think that Matthew was directed to leave them out for similar reasons. In some manuscripts it is found, "Josiah begat Jehoiaikim, and Jehoiaikim Jeconias;" and it is certain that Jeconias was *grandson* to Josiah, and the father or grandfather of Salathiel; nor does it appear that he had any brethren, for his uncle Zedekiah succeeded him, when he was carried to Babylon. From Jeconiah, who was carried captive, to Joseph the husband of Mary, were also fourteen generations: and at that time the illustrious house of David was so reduced, that its rights, in the line of Solomon, centered in a poor carpenter; at least he was that descendant, whom the Lord chose to stand in the place of a legal father to the promised Messiah, that so this expected Prophet, Priest, and King, might spring up "as a tender Plant out of a dry ground." The marginal references contain nearly all the information which can be obtained on the subject of this genealogy. It is probable, that some names are omitted between Salmon and David. (*Note, Ruth* iv. 18--22.) And either the marginal addition of Jakim, or Jehoiaikim, must be admitted, or Jeconias, in the twelfth verse, must be considered as the son of Jeconias mentioned in the eleventh: for other

18 ¶ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privately.

20 But, while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the LORD

appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins.

22 Now all this was done, that it

wise the fourteen generations are not completed. Per-haps interpreters might save themselves the trouble of giving a reason of many things contained in this catalogue, by saying, St. Matthew here recites it, as he found it in the authentic copies of the Jews, who doubtless had preserved some known and approved genealogy of their descent from Abraham, the father of their nation, in whom they so much gloried, and from whose loins they expected the promised Messiah. (Whitby.)

V. 18, 19. In the Gospel according to St. Luke, we find a variety of circumstances which are here omitted; but this succinct narrative was deemed sufficient to introduce that history of Christ, which was first given to the Church. His mother Mary, a virgin of the house of David, had been contracted or betrothed to Joseph; but they had not completed the intended marriage, when it was found that she was with child. By a most extraordinary miracle, she had, continuing a virgin, conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit; that the promised Saviour might be "the Seed of the woman," in the strictest sense, and, though truly man, our Brother and Redeemer, yet not be conceived and born in sin. (Marg. Ref.) But Mary's espousals, before the time of her miraculous conception, sheltered her character from injurious suspicions; and a pious and prudent person was thus engaged to afford her assistance in the care of her son Jesus. When Joseph, who was now considered as the husband of Mary, found that she was pregnant, and probably heard from her an account of the vision which she had seen, &c.; (Luke i. 26-38); and perhaps learned such circumstances from Zacharias and Elizabeth, as tended to confirm her narration, he was at a loss how to act on so extraordinary an occasion. He might not be able to give full credit to what he had heard; and yet be unwilling to suspect a person, whom he so much valued, of having been false to him, and then of forming so extraordinary a story to cover her guilt. But being a just, or a conscientious godly man, he was neither willing in such circumstances to complete the marriage, nor yet to expose her to public disgrace and punishment; for according to the law, she would have been condemned to be stoned as an adulteress, if she had been proved guilty of incontinency after having been betrothed: and if he had declared his reasons for putting her away, without proceeding further against her, it would have exposed her character to lasting disgrace. He therefore purposed privately (that is, before two wit-

nesses,) to give her a bill of divorcement, and to put her away, without assigning his reasons for so doing. Some have thought, that reverence of Mary, when he found she was with child by the Holy Ghost, deterred him from marrying her: but though this might increase his perplexity, it is plain from the angel's answer to his objections, that they were not of this kind.

V. 20, 21. Whilst Joseph meditated on these interesting and perplexing matters, not knowing how to proceed, he fell asleep; and in his dream he was favoured with a vision of a holy angel, sent from God to direct him how to act. The angel addressed him as "The son of David," as one of that illustrious family, and probably the legal heir of its dignities. Perhaps few persons regarded him, in his reduced condition, on that account, and he himself might think little of such a neglected distinction. He had been afraid of acting contrary to his duty, reputation, interest, or peace, if he should proceed to complete his marriage with Mary, though considered as his legal wife; but the angel showed him, that these fears were unnecessary; for it would be profitable and proper for him to take her home to him, as the Lord had so ordered matters for wise and important reasons. The child, with which he knew her to be pregnant, was indeed conceived in her by the miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit; and would prove a Son, of which she would in due time be delivered; and then he, as the husband of Mary, and the supposed and legal father, was directed to call him JESUS. It hath been before observed, that the word JESUS is the same as Joshua, or Jehoshua, only framed to the Greek pronunciation and termination. Joshua, who brought the tribes of Israel into the rest of Canaan, was originally called Oseha, (Num. xiii. 8); but it was afterwards changed into Jehoshua, by an addition of the first syllable of the divine name, JEHOVAH; perhaps intimating, that not Joshua of himself, but JEHOVAH by him, would complete the deliverance of Israel. (Note, Num. xiii. 16.) As this name was given to the promised Messiah, it signified, as hath often been proved, JEHOVAH THE SAVIOUR, or, JEHOVAH-SALVATION; and it was given him, "because he would save his people from their sins." He delivers all who believe and obey him, from the guilt, condemnation, dominion, and pollution of all their sins; and finally he will save them from the very existence; and from all the effects, of sin, when death shall be swallowed up in victory, and sorrow in everlasting felicity. (Marg. Ref.)

might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,
 23 Behold, ^a a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and ^b they shall call his name ^c Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, ^d God with us.

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep, ^e did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:
 25 And knew her not till ^f she had brought forth her first-born son: ^g and he called his name JESUS.

V. 22, 23. This seems to be the evangelist's observation on these extraordinary events; yet it is probable, the angel showed Joseph, that this child was He, to whom all the prophets bare witness. The prophecy hath already been explained, (*Note, Is. vii. 14.*) and it was in the strictest sense fulfilled when the Virgin Mary's Son was called Jesus: for, **JEHOVAH-SALVATION**, and **IMMANUEL** *God with us*, are expressions of similar signification. If God be with us sinners, in Jesus Christ, he is "become our Salvation." But the Saviour has been known to vast multitudes, through successive generations, and been peculiarly dear to them, by his name **EMMANUEL**: and he will be so, to the end of time, yea, to all eternity.

V. 24, 25. This heavenly vision fully satisfied the mind of Joseph, and, rendering implicit obedience, he delayed not to take Mary home to him as his wife; providing thus for her reputation and comfort in her present circumstances, as far as it was in his power; but he had no conjugal intercourse with her, "till she had brought forth her first-born Son." Some reference in this expression might be had to Christ, as the "First-born of every creature," the Heir of all things, and in all having the pre-eminence: but it seems rather to relate to the law of Moses, concerning the first-born male being consecrated to God. (*Marg. Ref.*) Jesus being called Mary's *first-born Son*, does not prove that she had more children afterwards: nor did it seem good to the Holy Spirit to gratify men's foolish curiosity, about the terms, on which Joseph and Mary afterwards lived together: they, who have contended for, and they who have denied, Mary's perpetual virginity, have alike wandered in the pathless regions of uncertain and useless conjecture. It is true that some of the zealous champions for the affirmative, intended to give some support to their antichristian worship of the Virgin Mary, and their antichristian admiration of virginity and celibacy: but we want no proof that God alone ought to be worshipped, and that "marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—17.

The Lord proves his people's faith and patience by long delays; but his promises stand sure, and will all be fulfilled in due season: nor can we have the least pretence for doubting the rest: as that grand promise, of the incarnation of his beloved Son to be our Surety and atoning Sacrifice, hath been exactly verified. In reviewing the generations of men that have lived on earth, how vain, transitory, and worthless do all things here below appear! We pass as shadows over the plain, and move on as a pageant over the stage: and except we have a nobler and more enduring inheritance in heaven, it would have been better for us

never to have been born, whatever distinctions we may have possessed on earth. We may also profitably observe the fluctuations in outward circumstances, and the discordant characters that appear in the same genealogy: hence we should learn to expect our happiness from God, and in heaven; and not to flatter our minds with empty hopes concerning our posterity, of whom we cannot know whether they will be rich or poor, wise or foolish, holy or unholy, honourable or dishonourable, happy or miserable. When the Son of God was pleased to assume our nature, he came as near to us, in all the circumstances of our fallen condition, as consisted with his being perfectly free from sin: and whilst we read some of the names in his genealogy, we should not forget how the Lord of glory stooped, to save the vilest of the human race. How absurd then must it be, for men to reproach others with the crimes of their ancestors, or to glory in the virtues or honours of their own!

V. 18—23.

We should often recollect the circumstances, in which the Son of God made his entrance into this lower world, that we may learn to despise the distinctions of rank, birth, or affluence, when compared with the real dignity which piety and holiness confer. A poor obscure virgin espoused to a carpenter, was chosen to be the honoured mother of Him, by whom kings reign, and before whom they must all appear in judgment! Doubtless he could have assumed our nature in an imperial palace, as well as in an obscure cottage, or rather a humble stable. But his dignity and honour were of a more exalted and heavenly nature, and like his "kingdom, which is not of this world." Indeed that honour, which cometh from God only, is seldom unattended with humiliating and distressing trials. She, whom God pronounced "highly favoured and blessed among women," was in danger of being suspected of the most atrocious crimes, by him whose opinion and affection must have been more regarded than those of any other person; nay, of being exposed to the deepest infamy and most terrible punishment. Let us not then expect to escape calumnies and suspicions, even as to those things, in which we act most conscientiously, or from those persons whom we must love and esteem. But being careful to keep a clear conscience, let us leave it to the Lord to protect our characters: and if appearances should at any time be against us; let us not be over-anxious to vindicate ourselves, but keep on in the path of duty, and wait till he shall justify us from unmerited reproaches. In this way he will in due season appear for us: and if in the mean time we meet with severe mortifications; let us remember that we need them, "as thorns in the flesh," to keep down our pride, which would

CHAP. II.

Wise men from the east, guided by a star, come to Jerusalem, inquiring for "him who was born king of the Jews," 1-2. Herod, being alarmed, learns that Christ should be born at Bethlehem, and sends the wise men thither, 3-8. The star guides them to Jesus, whom they honour and worship; and being warned by God they return home another way, 9-12. Joseph is directed to go with the child and his mother into Egypt, 13-15. Herod murders the children at and near Bethlehem, 16-18. After Herod's death,

otherwise tarnish all our endowments and services. In dubious cases, it behooves a pious man to deliberate with great attention; and to choose the lenient rather than the severer judgment or measures: and though we ought by no means to connect ourselves with persons whose conduct would be likely to expose our characters to disgrace, yet we should not judge by appearances: and we are sometimes liable to scrupulous fears, when our duty, interest, credit, and comfort, require us to proceed. But, he who desires to know, that he may do, the will of God, and uses proper means of instruction, shall not be left to fall into any fatal error. We cannot now expect immediate revelations, or angelic interpreters of the mind of God; but we may discover it, as it stands revealed in his word, and be thus enabled to proceed with confidence and comfort. But whilst we make observations on the circumstances of this extraordinary conception and birth, let us not overlook the end for which the Son of God was manifested in our nature. Men may pervert and abuse, or they may object to, the sacred truths of God's word: but surely none can be encouraged to continue *in* sin, by a free and gracious salvation *from* sin! None can have evidence that they are the people of Christ, who are not now saved from the dominion of their sins, and are not seeking continually for deliverance from the remaining power and pollution of them. Every time that we name the sacred name of JESUS, we should be reminded to rely on him for this complete salvation; that we may be delivered from guilt and from sin, and saved in him, "the LORD our Righteousness, with an everlasting salvation." Then may we rejoice that "God is with us," as our reconciled Friend and Portion in every place, and in all the circumstances of mortal life. EMMANUEL will be our Strength and Song in all our tribulations, and in the hour of death; we shall daily experience the fulfilling of the Scriptures; and be enabled to proceed with comfort in the path of unreserved obedience; and all our perplexities and troubles will soon terminate in glory, honour, and immortal felicity.

NOTES.

CHAP. II. V. 1, 2. Herod was an Edomite by descent, though proselyted to the Jewish religion. He obtained the kingdom of Judea by favour of the Romans,

Joseph returns from Egypt, with Jesus and Mary; and goes to dwell at Nazareth, 19-23.

NOW when ^a Jesus was born in ^b Bethlehem of Judea, in the ^c days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men ^d from the east to Jerusalem,

2 Saying, Where is he that is ^e born king of the Jews? for we have seen ^f his star in the east, and are come to ^g worship him.

3 ¶ When Herod the king had heard these things, ^h he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

37. 1 Kings xviii. 17, 18. John xii. 47, 48. Acts iv. 2. 24-27. v. 24-28. xvi. 20, 21. xviii. 6, 7.

and by means of much war and bloodshed. He reigned ⁱ in prosperity for about thirty-five years; but his whole administration was tarnished with the most horrible cruelties. Among many others, he put to death his wife Mariamne, and two of his own sons. He was seventy years of age; but as full of ambition and jealousy, and as prompt to every act of tyranny and cruelty, as ever, at the time when these *wise men* came to inquire about the birth of Christ. The original word is *Magoi*, or Magians; it is used in the New Testament in a bad sense, (*Acts* viii. 9-11. xiii. 6-12:) yet there was a sect of philosophers, and indeed of religionists, who were called by this name; and who seem to have come nearer to many truths of revealed religion, than almost any other of the heathen. Probably these were men of some eminence and learning, belonging to that sect. An opinion at that time prevailed throughout all the east, that an extraordinary person was about to arise in Judea, who would acquire the dominion over the nations; which doubtless originated from a partial acquaintance with the writings of the ancient prophets; and from the Jews dispersed in great numbers in all these countries. These sages, or wise men, no doubt, expected this event, and were looking out for some intimations of its taking place: and it is probable, that they were also favoured with divine intimations of its speedy approach, and shown something of the Redeemer's real glory, and the nature of his kingdom. It is not agreed, of what country they were. Many think that they came from Arabia; and from the opinion, that the prophecy of David was fulfilled by them, (*Ps.* lxxii. 9, 10.) the absurd popish legend, that they were three kings, seems to have arisen. The remoter regions of Arabia extended far to the south of Judea: and the queen of Sheba, called "the queen of the south," (*xii.* 42;) is by many supposed to have come from thence. (*Note, 1 Kings* x. 1, 2.) The Magians resided chiefly in Persia, and in countries still further to the east: and it is not improbable, that these *Magi* came from those regions. An extraordinary luminous appearance in the heavens, which they noticed, induced them to this journey, as they assuredly gathered from it, that One was born to be the King of the Jews; but they could not reasonably have drawn this conclusion, unless God, who thus excited their attention, had also in

1 Gen. xxxi. 14.
2 Num. xxi.
3 Jer. xxi. 10.
4 Judg. xvi. 10.
5 Job. xli. 1.
6 Prov. xxi. 3.
7 Dan. ix. 13.
8 Jer. xxi. 10.
9 Gen. xli. 7.
10 Kings. xxi. 12.
11 Jer. xxi. 15.
12 Jer. xxi. 15.
13 Jer. xxi. 15.
14 Rev. xxi. 6.
15 7.

16 ¶ Then Herod, ¹ when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, ² was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, ³ and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, ⁴ according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

17 Then was ⁵ fulfilled that which ⁶ was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying.

18 In ⁷ Rama was there a voice heard, ⁸ lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, ⁹ Rachel weeping for her children, and ¹⁰ would not be comforted, because they are not.

1 Jer. xxi. 10.
2 Jer. xxi. 10.
3 Jer. xxi. 10.
4 Jer. xxi. 10.
5 Jer. xxi. 10.
6 Jer. xxi. 10.
7 Jer. xxi. 10.
8 Jer. xxi. 10.
9 Jer. xxi. 10.
10 Jer. xxi. 10.

by his espousals to Mary, to afford her his assistance in these difficult circumstances. And the oblations of the eastern sages would prove a very seasonable supply, to enable the holy family to bear the expenses of so long a journey, and of their maintenance in a foreign country. In this exiled state they remained till the death of Herod, which seems to have taken place a few months after. The evangelist adds, This was done, "that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet, saying, 'Out of Egypt have I called my Son:;' (Note, Hosea xi. 1.) many prophecies seem to have had a double meaning, both respecting the Church, and Christ the Head of the Church. And there appears to have been a particular intention of Providence in Christ's going into Egypt, that he might come up at the divine call from the same place, whence the nation of Israel had been brought. Every circumstance favours the conclusion, that Joseph was warned to flee into Egypt, immediately after the departure of the wise men; and that he considered the case to be so urgent, as not to admit of the least delay. Numbers of Jews were settled in Egypt, which would render his situation more comfortable than it would otherwise have been. 'Herein was fulfilled, in a higher degree, that which was spoken by Hosea. That which he spake of 'the people of Israel, which were the sons of God by 'choice and adoption, was now fulfilled in him, who was 'the natural and eternal Son of the Father.' (Bp. Hall.) — These words can import no less, than that the calling 'of Christ out of Egypt was intended by God as a completion of them; and that till he was called thence, they 'had not received their full and ultimate completion.' (Whitby.)

V. 16—18. Herod, after waiting for some time, found that the wise men did not return to him; and he supposed their conduct to arise from suspicion, or contempt, and deemed himself greatly affronted by it. Thus his jealousy, disappointment, and indignation, concurred in working him up to a degree of rage which bordered on madness: and determining to make sure, as he thought, of the destruction of his hated competitor, he sent forth, as it is probable, some of the soldiers that composed his guard, and slew all the male children, that were found in Bethlehem and the dependent villages, which were under two years of age; taking large measure enough, but having respect to the time, at which the wise men informed him they had first seen the star. Thus the date of Christ's birth was publicly marked; and all others, that could pretend to be the Messiah, as born at Bethlehem about the same time, were cut off. This event formed another accomplishment of the prophecy of Jeremiah, which we have already considered. (Note, Jer. xxxi. 15—17.)

Rachel, who lay buried betwixt Rama and Bethlehem, might be poetically represented on this occasion to weep inconsolably for the slaughter of her children. Doubtless many of the descendants of Joseph and Benjamin were murdered, as well as those of Judah, in this massacre. It may be observed, that the Evangelist does not say "That it might be fulfilled;" but "Then was fulfilled;" for which an apt accommodation may suffice. Imagination can better conceive, than the pen can describe, the horrors of such a brutal scene, and the anguish of the tender mothers over their infant offspring, torn from their arms, and butchered before their eyes: it is doubtless almost impossible to conceive of any wickedness more completely diabolical. Indeed, some have objected to the authenticity of the narrative on this ground: but the following account of Herod's last purpose and deed will satisfy the reader, that there was nothing too vile for that wretched man to perpetrate. 'Knowing the hatred the Jews had for him, he concluded aright, that there would be no lamentations at his death, but rather gladness and rejoicing all the country over. To prevent this, he framed a project and resolution in his mind, which was one of the horriddest and most wicked, perchance, that ever entered into the heart of man. For, having issued out a summons to all the principal Jews of the kingdom, commanding their appearance at Jericho (where he then lay,) on pain of death, at a day appointed, on their arrival thither he shut them all up in the circus, and then sending for Salome his sister, and Alexas her husband, commanded them, that as soon as he was dead, they should send in the soldiers upon them, and put them all to the sword; for this, said he, will provide mourning for my funeral all over the land, and make the Jews in every family lament my death, whether they will or no: and when he had adjured them hereto, some hours after, he died. But they, not being wicked enough to do what they had been solemnly made to promise, rather chose to break their obligation, than to make themselves the executioners of 'so bloody and horrid a design.' (Prideaux.) Nor need it be wondered at, that Josephus does not record the slaughter of the infants; for he evidently chose to make the best of Herod's bad character, though in many things he could not conceal its infamy: and he never without reluctance mentioned any circumstances, which led him to give his thoughts of Christianity. Yet he could not but know, that Matthew had recorded it as a known matter of fact, and, as he never contradicted or disputed it, he may be said to have tacitly allowed the truth of it. As, however, internal and external evidences sufficiently demonstrate the evangelist's divine inspiration, we need no corroborating testimony to confirm the fact.

u Ps lxxvi. 10.
15 11 12 Dan
viii. 25 xi 15
x 15. i 20 Pa
cxxxix 7 Jer
xxix 10 Ez xi.
y 13 Prov. iii. 5.
6.

z Ex iv 10. 1
Kings xi 21.
40 xii 1-3.

a Gen vi 22.
Heb xi 8.

19 ¶ But when ^u Herod was dead, be-
hold, ^x an angel of the Lord appeareth
in a dream to Joseph in Egypt.

20 Saying, ^y Arise, and take the young
child and his mother, and go into the
land of Israel: ^z for they are dead which
sought the young child's life.

21 And ^a he arose, and took the young
child and his mother, and came into the
land of Israel.

V. 19—23. In a few months after Herod had perpetrated the massacre of the infants, he ended his life and cruelties together, in a manner almost too shocking to be related: he endured such excruciating, lingering, and loathsome diseases, as rendered him intolerable to himself and others also. Just before his death, he caused Antipater, his son and the heir apparent of his kingdom, to be executed on some groundless suspicion. An angel was sent to Joseph, to admonish him to go back with the young child and his mother into the land of Israel, as *they* were dead that had sought the young child's life. Perhaps Antipater had concurred with Herod in attempting to destroy Jesus. Joseph, however, immediately returned into the land of Judah: but finding that Archelaus, the son of Herod, had obtained from the Romans the government of that part of the country in which Bethlehem was situated, and perhaps learning that he was of a jealous cruel disposition, Joseph feared to settle there; but being further admonished of God, he went into Galilee, in the northern part of the land, which was under the rule of Philip, who was of a more quiet temper; and fixed his residence at Nazareth, where we find, from St. Luke he had formerly dwelt. The sacred historian, on this occasion, adds, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." "He does not cite any particular prophet for these words, as before, (i. 22:) but only what was spoken by the prophets in general; he took not the words from the prophets, but the sense only." "Most of the prophets speak of the Messiah, as of a person that was to be reputed vile and abject, despised and rejected of men." (*Marg. Ref.*)—Now the Nazarene was a name of infamy put upon Christ and Christians, both by the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles. This title they always gave by way of contempt to our Jesus, because he was supposed to come out of this city: yea, his very going to dwell there was one occasion of his being despised and rejected by the Jews. (*John i. 46. vii. 42.*) The angel sent him to this contemptible place, that he might hence have a name of infamy and contempt put upon him, according to the frequent intimations of the prophets. (*Whitby.*) Others consider the word Nazarene as of the same import with Nazarite; and as derived from *nazar*, to separate. The same word is used of Joseph, who was one separated from his brethren. (*Gen. xlix. 26. Deut. xxxiii. 16.*) "As Joseph was by his brethren sold into Egypt; so is Christ by the persecution of Herod driven thither: As Joseph was "separated from his brethren," and cast out from among them; so was Christ, for fear of Archelaus, se-

22 But when he heard that Archelaus
did reign in Judea in the room of his fa-
ther Herod, ^b he was afraid to go thither:
notwithstanding, ^c being warned of God
in a dream, he turned aside ^d into the parts
of Galilee:

23 And he came and dwelt in a city
called ^e Nazareth. that it might be ful-
filled which was spoken by the prophets,
^f He shall be called a Nazarene.

b Gen. xix 17-
21. Ps. xxi 12.
2. Acts ix 12.
14.
c 1. i 20. Pa.
xviii 14. xxviii
24. cxi. 6. 7.
cxxxix 9. lxxviii
21. xliii 17. 19.
d. iii 12. John vii.
41. 42. 52.
e John xxi. 15. 7.
xix. 12. Acts ii.
22.
f cxxxix 71. Ps.
lxxxix 9. 10. 14.
lxi 1. John i.
45. 46. Acts
xix. 5.

parated from his own tribe of Judah, and constrained to dwell in Nazareth of Galilee, whose name may denote that flight or separation." (*Hammond.*) The Nazarenes, or separated ones, were peculiarly consecrated to God; and, if we allow that there was any thing typical in that remarkable appointment, we cannot but recollect, that Jesus was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners;" and that "for our sakes he sanctified himself," or consecrated himself to God, to be our atoning Sacrifice.—Indeed, he did not observe the law of the Nazarite, and on that account was not called a Nazarite; yet to mark him out, as the Antitype of this typical order, he dwelt at Nazareth, during the greatest part of his life; and so was called the Nazarene, which is a word of the same signification. Samson was "called a Nazarite from the womb;" (*Judg. xiii. 5.*) and he was a remarkable type of Christ, both as delivering his people, by his own strength, without their help; and as triumphing over his and their enemies even by his death. Many, however, derive the word Nazareth from *netzar* a branch; and suppose those prophecies to be referred to, in which Christ is promised under the title of THE BRANCH. "The appellation which is given him, of a Nazarene, however it be objected to him by way of reproach, is rather a notable proof of his answerableness to that prediction of the prophets; especially that of Isaiah, who by "the root of Jesse," whence he should come, describes Bethlehem, the dwelling of Jesse, for the place of his birth; and by that *netzar*, (or Branch,) which should arise from that root, meant to allude to the place of his abode and education." (*Bp. Hall.*) The first interpretation, however, is most satisfactory.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—8.

It is often found, that they who live at a distance from the means of grace, are led to use double diligence; and thus first get acquainted with Christ and his salvation.—But neither natural science, nor abstruse speculations, nor curious arts, can avail in this great concern. The sacred Scripture must be searched, with attentive diligence, obedient faith, and fervent prayer. This is "a light shining in a dark place;" and they, who follow this sacred direction, will spare no labour or expense in inquiring after Jesus, our Prince and Saviour; they will desire to render him honour and submission; they will devote their talents to his service; and not be reluctant to avow their expectations from him and obligations to him. But, alas!

CHAP. III.

John Baptist's preaching, and manner of life, and the prophecy fulfilled in him, 1—4. Multitudes resort to him, and are baptized, 5, 6. His bold and solemn ad-

dress to the Pharisees and Sadducees, 7—10. His testimony concerning Christ, 11, 12. Jesus is baptized; the Holy Spirit descends on him, and God, by a voice from heaven, declares him to be his beloved Son, 13—17.

should eastern sages, or strangers from distant nations, come to many of those cities where Christianity is professed, purposely to inquire after Christ and his religion; how little satisfaction would they find from the rulers and teachers of the Church! And how much would they be surprised at the ignorance and inattention of those, who have the best opportunities of instruction, respecting the truths and duties of their holy profession! Such inquirers would not indeed excite much consternation or uneasiness, either to princes or people: but they would probably occasion great astonishment; and even excite the contempt and derision of those who never bestowed any pains in acquainting themselves with him, whose disciples they profess to be. There are but few places, where so much regard would be shown them, as that princes and teachers should assemble, in order to consider and answer their inquiries: and even should this be done, it would perhaps be found rather to arise from profane policy, than from a cordial desire to promote the knowledge of Christ and his salvation! The Scripture must needs be fulfilled; and they who are acquainted with the Bible, and who believe that matters have been, are, and will be, according to the testimony of that blessed book, are likely to find the right way, and to point it out to others: and, however little in other respects, all who are related to Christ, and submit to him as the Governor and Shepherd of Israel, will be numbered with the princes of his people. But let us beware of a dead faith. It is plain from facts, that a man may have a prevailing persuasion of many truths, and yet hate them virulently, because they interfere with his ambition, interest, or sinful indulgence. Such a belief will give him uneasiness, and strengthen his resolution of opposing the cause of God: and so great is the inconsistency of human nature, that a man may deliberately form projects to defeat those purposes, which he cannot but perceive are from the Lord; and may vainly hope for success in his impious and infatuated attempts! Indeed, this is the enmity, malignity, and misery of Satan, from age to age. But "he, who sitteth in heaven, will laugh" at such puny enemies, yea, "the Lord will have them in derision: yet will he speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." He can easily infatuate, counterplot or crush them, when he sees good: yet they often for a time impose upon the unsuspecting simplicity of pious men, and, by pretending to join them in honouring Christ, they draw them in to forward their base designs.

V. 9—15.

The Lord will guide with his counsel those who follow the teaching of his word, and wait on him for further light: he can help them even by means of ungodly men, who know more than they practise; and none shall ever seek his face in vain. Every indication of obtaining an

interest in Christ will give a sincere and very great joy to the humble inquirer after him: he will not be stumbled at finding the Saviour or his disciples in obscure cottages, after having in vain sought them in palaces and populous cities: he will never fear honouring the Lord of glory too much, or being too devoted to his service. And thus our Father, who knows what his children have need of, uses some as his stewards to supply the wants of others; and he will provide for them in every emergency, though the provision should come from the ends of the earth. But let us remember, that this event was an indication of Christ's being "the Light of the Gentiles, as well as the Glory of "Israel:" and whilst we are thankful for our mercies, let us recollect, that if we do not honour and worship him as our Lord and Saviour, who now reigns on his glorious throne, these eastern sages will rise up against us too in judgment: for they came from far, to worship him as an infant in the arms of his mother. But if we sincerely follow his guidance, he will by various interpositions direct our conduct; and he hath unnumbered methods of defeating the most subtle and best concerted machinations of his enemies.

V. 16—23.

It is impossible to assign any limits to the wickedness of the human heart, when furious passions and great authority combine; and when sinners are become callous by habit, and daring by impunity in atrocious crimes. The near approach of death, instead of weakening the ambition, malice or cruelty of such men, seems to render them more in haste to seize the fleeting moment of perpetrating their enormities: as if they were afraid of not treasuring up wrath enough! or as if they would set death, and even God himself, at defiance! No wonder therefore that they are unmoved with compassion for bleeding infants and inconsolable parents, and that they seem to take delight in "lamentation, weeping, and great mourning," occasioned by their cruelties: yet are they more wretched by their own vile passions, than they can render others. It is well for the world, that the triumphing of overgrown monsters in wickedness commonly proves short; and sometimes their miseries on this side the grave give a specimen of the dire effects of thus waging war, as it were, both against God and man. But, having observed the necessity of avoiding the beginnings of iniquity and impiety, if we would be secured from these horrid extremes, let us avert our eyes from such scenes, to contemplate the reception which the Lord of glory met with; when he condescended to visit us with great humility; and in these his early persecutions and sufferings, learn what usage we must expect, if we are the children of God, in this world which lieth in wickedness; and at what a price all our hopes and comforts were purchased for us by our Surety! As the early honours that he received proved the occasion of his

a Luke iii. 1, 2.
 b Mt. xii. 2.
 c Mt. xvi. 13, xvii.
 d 13, 14, xvii. 22.
 e 22, 23, Mark i.
 f 4, 15-23.
 g Luke i. 13-17; 75; 10-20. John i. 6-8, 15-5. vi. 27-26. Acts i. 23, vii. 24, 25.
 h John 3, 4. c 15. Mt. 31-6. Mark i. 7. Luke 17. d Mt. 7. John xv. 51, 62.
 i Luke vii. 24.

IN those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea,

perils and fatigues: so they that belong to him cannot reasonably expect to be honoured by God, without meeting with trouble and contempt from men. Let it suffice us to be as our Master, hoping to have the promises of Scripture fulfilled to us, as the prophecies were in him. But we must not expect much solid comfort even from near and dear relations, as our children are far more frequently the occasions of care and deep distress, than of abiding satisfaction: yet we should not refuse to be comforted, when they are taken from us. For though they die, as sinners, according to the righteous sentence of God; and not in the peculiar circumstances of these infants, who may be considered as a kind of martyrs for Christ; yet we may comfortably conclude, that when they cease to be with us on earth, they are only gone before us to heaven, through the second Adam, the Lord of life and salvation. —Wherever Providence allots us the bounds of our habitation, we must expect to share the reproach of Christ, and to be branded with some opprobrium for his sake: yet, if this is because we are consecrated to God through him, and copy his example of truth and righteousness, we may glory in the distinction, assured, that “as we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together.”

NOTES.

CHAP. III. V. 1. St. Matthew entirely passes over John's parentage and birth, and the remarkable circumstances that attended them. (Notes, Luke i.) Indeed we are scarcely informed of any thing relating to the childhood and youth, either of Christ or of his forerunner; though we might have expected to find many curious and interesting particulars concerning them; as the one was wholly born without sin, and the other filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. Some think that John entered on his public ministry about his thirtieth year; but others, who assign a longer time to his ministry before the baptism of Christ, must conclude that he began to preach at an earlier age; as Christ, who was only six months younger, was baptized when thirty years old.—John had spent his youth in retirement, and doubtless in contemplation, and such devout exercises as were suited to prepare him for his extraordinary work: he had attained an uncommon degree of deadness to the world, of holy fortitude, zeal, humility, and devotedness to God, and of every grace and gift, which could qualify him for usefulness: and his mortified spirit and conduct were peculiarly suited to that severe ministry of the law, and that work of humiliation and reformation, by which he was to prepare the Jews for receiving their expected Messiah. But as he was a priest, and the son of so distinguished a person as Zachariah; as his birth had been so miraculous and greatly noticed, and himself so very excellent and remarkable a person: so he could not be very obscure in his retirement. Probably his reputation was considerable, before he entered on his public work, which might conduce to the exceeding popularity of his ministry. He was called the Baptist,

2 And saying, ‘Repent ye:’ for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

6 P. 2. H. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

or the Baptist, because he admitted the Jews into the number of his disciples by the external rite of baptism, as a sign, or profession, of repentance. He did not go up to Jerusalem, but opened his ministry in the wilderness, or the least populous part of the country. He came preaching, or as a herald proclaiming the near approach of the Messiah, their expected King. ‘By “those days”’ is meant, at that time when Jesus remained as yet an inhabitant of Nazareth.’ (Beza.)

V. 2. The Jews thought that the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom belonged to them exclusively; and as they expected temporal deliverance, victory, prosperity, and pre-eminence, they were disposed to prepare for his coming, by levying armies and making insurrections. But John's preaching was, “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;” which doubtless he enlarged upon, explained, and applied to his hearers. The kingdom of heaven signifies the Gospel-dispensation; which is so called, because the God of heaven then began to set up that kingdom which will at length fill the earth. (Marg. Ref.) It is the kingdom of God and of heaven, set up among men, in opposition to the power of the devil, the god and prince of this world; and in the person of Christ, the Son of God, who was manifested, to destroy the “works of the devil.” Into this kingdom sinners enter by faith in Christ; then their rebellions are pardoned, they return to their allegiance, become willing subjects, and are admitted to enjoy all the immunities and privileges of the kingdom. These are all of a heavenly nature; they come from, prepare for, and at length issue in the felicity of heaven; which sometimes also is meant by the kingdom of heaven. “The kingdom of God,” signifies the Gospel-dispensation, in which subjects were to be gathered to God by his Son, and a society formed, which was to subsist first in more imperfect circumstances on earth, but afterwards was to appear complete in the world of glory. In some places, the phrase more particularly signifies the state of it on earth; and sometimes only the state of glory. (Marg. Ref.) It is plain, that the Jews understood it of a temporal kingdom, which God would erect; the seat of which, they supposed, would be at Jerusalem, which would become, instead of Rome, the capital of the world. And the expected Sovereign of this kingdom they learned, from Daniel, to call “the Son of Man.” Both John the Baptist then, and Christ, took up this phrase, and gradually taught the Jews to affix right ideas to it; though it was a lesson, which they were remarkably unwilling to learn. This very demand of repentance showed, that it was a spiritual kingdom; and that no wicked man could possibly be a genuine member of it. (Dodridge.) The kingdom of heaven is a term peculiar to St. Matthew's Gospel; but “the kingdom of God,” in the other parts of the New Testament, seems perfectly synonymous. This kingdom of heaven was at hand: the King was about to appear, to collect followers, to finish his work, to ascend his

3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.
4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle

about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

5 Then he went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan,

6 And he was baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

throne, to abrogate the legal dispensation, to terminate the Jewish national covenant, to admit the Gentiles into the Church; and to introduce the Christian dispensation. If the Jews then meant to share the blessings of it, they must prepare for them by repentance: they must no longer trust in outward distinctions; but, comparing their tempers and conduct with the law of God, they must judge and condemn themselves, be sorry and humbled for their sins, and turn from them all to the love and service of God. The word implies a total revolution in the mind; a change in the judgment, dispositions, and affections; another and better bias to the soul. Without this repentance the people could not understand the nature of the kingdom of heaven; nor could they welcome Christ, become his subjects, or desire his salvation.

V. 3. The ministry of John fulfilled a prophecy that hath already been considered, (*Note, Is. xl. 3—5.*) John was "a voice," which conveys the mind of the speaker, and then vanishes: he declared the mind of God concerning his Son, and then was seen no more: for his ministry was of short continuance. He proclaimed Christ, as the Son of God, the King of Israel, and the Saviour of the world; and thus he prepared the way of the Lord, of JEHOVAH, for so the word is in Isaiah; and he made his paths straight. As pioneers level the road for a monarch, that is about to march his army through deserts, mountains, or morasses; so John's preaching, by humbling the proud, detecting the hypocrites, counteracting the prejudices of the people, rectifying their judgment, and raising their minds from low and grovelling pursuits, to aspire after things truly great and excellent, prepared the Jews for the reception of Christ.

V. 4. (*Note, 2 Kings i. 8.*) We need not be very accurate in determining what John's food and raiment were. It is probable his outward garment was made of camel's hair, woven into coarse rough cloth; and that this was girded about him with a piece of undressed leather. His food, (that is, frequently, as it may be supposed,) consisted of locusts: these were allowed as clean by the law, and they are often eaten in those parts at this day. To this was added the honey, which the bees made in the uncultivated parts of the land, and which was found in great plenty. The finer parts of camel's hair is indeed formed into a soft and delicate stuff: but it is manifest, that a coarse and rough garment, made of the long hair of the camel, and wrought in a rude manner, is intended. And the critical pains of learned men, to prove that a plant or pulse was meant by the word translated locusts, seems to have been labour in vain. It is more to the purpose to observe, that this extraordinary man, who was "great in the sight of the Lord," was very homely in his

attire, and frugal in his diet; faring as a poor person, desiring neither abundance nor delicacies, but taking any thing which came to hand in his retirement, to satisfy his wants, being wholly intent on matters of a more important and spiritual nature. As he could live on little, and was inured to hardship, he was independent of the rich and great, and might be the more direct and plain in his reproofs of them; so that this circumstance seems to have had a considerable effect in forming the other parts of his character.

V. 5, 6. Through a divine influence on the minds of men, vast numbers were induced to resort to John in the wilderness, from all parts of Judea, and from Jerusalem; so that the whole city and country, as it were, went out to him: and he was especially attended by the inhabitants of those regions which lay on each side of the river Jordan, where, after a time, he commonly exercised his ministry. He became at length so celebrated, that the Jews of all ranks and parties flocked to him: and when they were brought to confess their sins, and to profess repentance, and a purpose of submitting to Christ and leading a new life, they were baptized by John, *in, or at*, the river Jordan: for it is certain, that the prepositions here and elsewhere used, concerning baptism, are capable of either interpretation. The law of Moses prescribed divers washings or baptisms, in which water was used in different ways, as an emblem of the purging of the soul from the pollution of sin, in order that the priests or people might attend on the service of God with acceptance. By degrees it became customary in the Jewish church to baptize those who were proselyted to their religion from the Gentiles, both male and female, as well as to circumcise the males: this denoted, that they deemed them unclean in themselves, and not meet to join the congregation of the Lord, till they were washed from the filthiness of their Gentile state. The prophets also sometimes alluded to this emblem of the soul's being cleansed from sin; and some passages of the New Testament intimate, that both the cleansing from guilt, by the blood of Christ, and from pollution by the Spirit of Christ, were comprised under this outward sign; though the latter is more generally intended. (*Marg. Ref.*) But though baptism had been before in use, John was singular in baptizing all his disciples, notwithstanding that they were Jews, and without distinction of sect or previous character; thus intimating, that by nature and practice they were all polluted, and could not be admitted among the true people of God, except washed from their sins, in the fountain that Christ was about to open. This was done by express divine direction; (*John i. 33*;) but though his use of baptism was introductory to the appointment of that ordinance, to be the initiatory sacrament

7 ¶ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

8 Bring forth, therefore, fruits * meet for repentance.

9 And * think not to say within your-

and seal of the new dispensation, as circumcision had been of the old: yet we must not consider it as exactly the same with Christian baptism; but rather as an institution for the time being, and an introduction to the change which was gradually to take place, when the old dispensation should be abrogated, and the new one substituted and openly established. Baptism, as used by John, was not intended to supersede circumcision; for it does not appear that he baptized any but circumcised persons; (except he baptized the women among the Jews, which is no where said, though it is probable.) We cannot suppose, that he "baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," or that Jesus was thus baptized: nay, the contrary is manifest: (*Acts xix. 2, 3*;) and probably Christ's disciples did not use that peculiar form of Christian baptism till after the ascension of their Lord. It is also evident, that some at least, who had received John's baptism, received Christian baptism when admitted into the Church of Christ; for it cannot be supposed, but that some of the multitude, who heard Peter on the day of Pentecost, had been John's disciples; yet he exhorted them all to be baptized in the name of Jesus, and the three thousand who gladly received the word were thus baptized. (*Acts ii. 38-41*.) John's baptism and Christian baptism, therefore, were not exactly the same; and inferences from the one respecting the other are inconclusive. It does not appear, that any but adults were baptized by John: for circumcision still continued in force, as the initiatory ordinance and seal of the covenant: and therefore we never read that he baptized households, as the apostles did. Adult Jews, professing repentance and a disposition to become Messiah's subjects, were the only persons whom John admitted to baptism. Water was the outward sign; and probably it was commonly administered by immersion, though that cannot perhaps be fully proved. The word *baptizo* certainly is not exactly synonymous to *bapto*, which signifies to dip, or plunge; this must be evident to those who impartially consider the various passages, in which the baptism of the Holy Ghost is described, by his being poured upon us, poured forth abundantly, &c. It seems to be a word borrowed from the Greek authors, signifying to plunge in, or bedew with, water, without any exact distinction; (which being a diminutive from *bapto*, to dip, it might do, according to the analogy of the language;) and it was adopted into the style of Scripture in a peculiar sense, to signify the use of water in this ordinance, and various spiritual matters which have a relation to it. The use of water is essential to the sign, because that is the universal purifier: the quantity or mode of application

selves, "We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

10 And * now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: * therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit * is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

seem to be merely circumstances, varying as occasions may require. The inward and spiritual signification is exactly the same as that of circumcision, which is spoken of as the *circumcision of the heart*, that is, *regeneration and sanctification* by the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit: and the Jews were taught by John's use of baptism, that their outward advantages would never qualify them to enjoy the blessings of Messiah's kingdom, except their hearts were washed from the leav and pollution of sin; since they were by nature polluted, born in sin, and the children of wrath, even as the Gentiles were. Some indeed contend zealously, that baptism always signifies immersion; and learned men, who have regarded Jewish traditions more than either the language of Scripture, or the Greek idiom, are very decided in this respect: but the use of the words baptize, and baptism, in the New Testament, cannot accord with this exclusive interpretation. On the other hand, some, arguing perhaps too much from modern habits, have been sufficiently decided for the opposite interpretation. But the writer of this note, after many years consideration and study, has above given the outline of his own conclusions; and would only add, that vastly too much eagerness and acrimony have been employed in disputes on the subject; and vastly too little attention to the instructions suggested by this ordinance, and to the practical improvement which might be made of the administration of it, for the benefit of all concerned, both at the time and afterwards.

V. 7-10. The Pharisees were the strictest sect of the Jews, and made the greatest profession of religion: and the most reputable of their scribes and elders belonged to it. Some of them seem to have been decent formalists, of moral character, but inflated with spiritual pride, and full of contempt of others. They laid the chief stress on external observances, often in minute matters, and according to their own traditions and inventions; so that neglecting the weightier matters of the moral law, and the spiritual meaning of the legal ceremonies, they dealt much in ostentatious austerities and mortifications. But others of them were the most detestable hypocrites imaginable, who made their reputation for extraordinary sanctity the cloak of exorbitant avarice, and the occasion for enormous oppression and iniquity. The Sadducees were the scornful infidels of the time: they professed to receive some, and reject other parts, of the sacred writings; but they paid no proper regard to any of them. They did not believe the resurrection of the dead: and as they allowed not the existence of angels, or spirits, they could not hold the immortality of the soul, or the

11 I indeed ^a baptize you with water
unto repentance: ^b but he that cometh
after me is mightier than I, ^c whose shoes
I am not worthy to bear: ^d he shall baptize
you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:
^e Luke i. 16. John i. 33. Acts i. 5. 2-4. xi. 15, 16. 1 Cor. xii. 13. Gal. iii. 27, 28.

12 Whose ^f fan is in his hand, and ^g he
will thoroughly purge his floor: ^h and ga-
ther his wheat into the garner; ⁱ but he
will burn up the chaff ^j with unquench-
able fire.

1. 4. XXXV. 5. 18. v. 21. xvi. 13. Hos. xiii. 3. Luke iii. 17. — n is 1. 31. lxxv. 24. Jer. vii. 20. xvii. 27. Ez. xxi. 47. 48. Mark x. 45-48.

future state of retribution; nay, it is hard to conceive how they could believe the being of a God. Some of them at least seem to have been mere philosophizing atheists; and the rest downright skeptics, who treated every thing relating to God and eternity as doubtful and disputable, and consequently with a contemptuous indifference. It is not clear, whether transient convictions, or a regard to reputation, brought these Pharisees and Sadducees to desire John's baptism; but they evidently came with wrong views and an improper disposition. The Sadducees were as proud of their superior discernment, as the Pharisees of their superior sanctity, and with as little reason: but neither of them were prepared, by repentance and humiliation before God, to welcome the mercy and spiritual blessings of the Messiah. Instead therefore of sanctioning their characters, or courting their favour, John plainly and roughly addressed them as "a generation of vipers," a race of subtle designing men, of poisonous principles and practice, dangerous to all around them, the genuine children of the old-serpent, the most hopeless part of the nation. He inquired with astonishment, "Who ^a had warned ^b them to flee from the wrath to come?" No doubt they deserved the wrath of God, which was about to come on the nation in this world, and on all unbelievers in the future and eternal state: but it could hardly be expected that such hypocrites and infidels would think of fleeing from it, without some extraordinary warning. Was this therefore from God? Or was it only from man? If, however, they truly repented, they might be admitted to his baptism: but then they must bring forth fruits meet for repentance, in humility, meekness, patience, faith, love, equity, truth, mercy, and every good work; in newness of life, proceeding from newness of heart; or the outward sign would be of no advantage to them. And they must not take encouragement, or any longer glory, because they were the descendants of faithful Abraham: for, though the promises were made to him and to his Seed, yet God could raise up children to Abraham from the very stones before their eyes, or from the poor Gentiles, whom they equally disregarded: seeing all believers, would be acknowledged as the spiritual seed of Abraham, and made heirs according to the promise. Instead therefore of expecting to appropriate the blessings of Messiah's reign, because of their descent from Abraham, they must observe that all these distinctions were about to be abolished: God was about to come into his vineyard, and to lay the axe to the root of every tree; and all, without exception, which did not bring forth the good fruits of a sober, righteous, and godly life, the fruits meet for repentance, would be cut down, and cast into the fire, without regard to external privileges, except as these tended to aggravate their guilt and condemnation. ^c Nothing ^d stoppeth up the way of mercy and salvation against us ^e so much as the opinion of our own righteousness.

(*Beza.*) And next to this, perhaps, the opinion that the Gospel is a mild dispensation, making allowance for sin in those who profess it, and not requiring that strict holiness which was before demanded, is the most fatal of any other. ^f Abraham sits next the gates of hell, and doth ^g not permit any wicked Israelite to go down into it.

(*Talmud.*) Do not many Christians seem to countenance a similar opinion, concerning those who are of their sect, or zealously contend for their sentiments?

V. 11, 12. John baptized the people with water, calling them to repentance, and making his baptism their outward profession of it, and the avowed beginning of a new life. But Jesus, (who came after John in order of time, but was immensely superior to him in dignity, authority, and excellency, inasmuch that John was not worthy to loose or carry his sandals, or to perform the lowest menial service for him,) would baptize them, "with the Holy Ghost and with fire." The descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, in the form of fiery tongues lighting on the apostles, with the effects produced on their minds and by their ministry, was a remarkable fulfilment of this prediction: yet this baptism, "by the Holy Spirit ^a and by fire," was vouchsafed comparatively to few of those who believed in Christ; but the language of John seems to denote a general benefit. (*Marg. Ref.*) The Saviour, whose forerunner John was, would communicate to his disciples the divine Sanctifier, as purifying water to wash away their *internal* pollutions; and as refining fire, to consume all their dross and the remains of their corrupt affections; to kindle in their hearts the holy flame of divine love and zeal; to illuminate their minds with heavenly wisdom, and to convert their whole souls into his own pure and holy nature. At the same time, to use another emblem, he would come to his visible Church, which then consisted of a few believers mingled with many hypocrites and wicked persons, as the husbandman to his heap of threshed corn, with his fan in his hand: and as he easily and exactly separates between the wheat and the worthless chaff, by winnowing the heap; so Christ, by his doctrine, his convincing Spirit, his omniscience, his providential dispensations, and, at the last judgment, would exactly separate believers from unbelievers: and as the husbandman gathers the wheat into his granary, and burns up the worthless chaff; so would Christ take care of believers, and execute vengeance on unbelievers. This immediately related to the reception of the pious Jews into the Christian Church, and the terrible judgments to be executed on the rejected Jewish nation: but it is equally applicable to the constant tendency of the Gospel, and to the final condition of the righteous and the wicked. The expression, "unquenchable fire," as fully proves that the wicked will never be released from the place of torment, as ^b "their ^c worm that never dieth" does, that they will never be annihilated.

o. ii. 22. Mark i.
9. Luke iii. 21.
p. Luke (4.) John
xvi. 6-8.
q. John i. 16. iii.
3-7. Acts i. 5-
8. Rom. iii. 23.
29. Gal. iii. 22.
27-29. iv. 6.
Eph. ii. 3-5.
Rev. vii. 9-17.
r. John xiii. 7-9.
s. Ps. xl. 7. 8. Is.
xlii. 21. Luke i.
6. John iv. 21.
viii. 23. xix. 16.
29. o. Phil. ii.
7. 8. Heb. xii.
26. 1 Pet. ii. 21.
—24. 1 John i. 6.

13 ¶ Then cometh Jesus * from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him.

14 But ¶ John forbid him, saying, ¶ I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me ?

15 And Jesus answering, said unto him, ¶ Suffer it to be so now : * for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16 And ¶ Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water : * and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, * and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him ;

17 And, ¶ lo, a voice from heaven, saying, ¶ This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

V. 13—15. After John had, during some time, fulfilled his ministry, Jesus came to be baptized by him. Being free from sin, he could not repent, and he needed no forgiveness, regeneration, or newness of life. He was not capable of those ends of baptism, for which it was administered to others : but he would honour it, as the ordinance of God ; and he would use it as a solemn introduction to his most sacred work and offices, of which John's testimony, the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him, and the voice from heaven, were so many notifications. John, being aware of his divine dignity and excellency, by immediate revelation, (*Marg. Ref.*) hesitated to comply with this proposal, declaring that he needed to be baptized of Christ with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and to be purged by him from his sins ; and he could not but be surprised, that he should come to him for this purpose, who was his servant, and a poor sinful man. But Jesus, allowing the truth of his words, intimated that it was proper that he should permit it to be so ; for, says he, "It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." We never find, that Jesus spake of himself in the plural number ; and must therefore allow, that he meant John also, and all God's servants, in a subordinate sense. It became Christ, as our Surety and our example, perfectly to fulfil all righteousness : and it becometh us to walk in all God's commandments and ordinances without exception ; and to attend on every divine institution, according to the meaning and intent of it, as long as it continues in force. Thus far Christ's example is obligatory ; but as John's baptism, not being exactly the same as Christian baptism, is no longer in force, the example only proves, that Christian baptism should be honoured and attended on. But controverted points cannot thus be settled, for Christ's example does not bind us to do exactly as he did ; as he was circumcised, kept the Passover, and observed the seventh-day Sabbath, according to the dispensation under which he lived.

V. 16, 17. All other persons, whom John baptized, confessed their sins : but Jesus went up straightway "from the water." And, immediately while he was praying, (*Luke iii. 21*) : "the heavens were opened ;" and the Holy Spirit "descended like a dove," the emblem of purity, gentleness, and love ; "and lighted upon him," probably, both in the form, and with the hovering motion of a dove. (*Note, Luke iii. 22.*) The extraordinary appearance was seen by John, as well as by our Lord : but it is not said that any of the people were present. (*Note, John i. 32—34.*) This visible descent of the Spirit upon Christ was a token of his being endued with his sacred

influences without measure, to qualify him as Man for every part of his mediatorial work, and to be communicated to his people from him, as the Head of the Church. (*Marg. Ref.*) At the same time a voice was heard from heaven, God the Father himself acknowledging Jesus as his beloved Son, in whose person, character, righteousness, and mediation, he was well pleased, and fully satisfied. And thus it was intimated, that they, who would find acceptance with the Father, must hear, believe, and obey his beloved Son, and ask all blessings in his name, and for his sake. At the baptism of our Lord, there was a manifestation of the three persons in the sacred Trinity, acting in their proper relations, according to the economy of our redemption. The Father appointing and sealing the Son to be the Mediator ; the Son solemnly accepting the designation, and entering upon his work ; and the Holy Spirit descending on him, as through his mediation communicated to his people, to apply his salvation to their souls. 'It is worthy of remark, what an assemblage of circumstances present themselves to our notice on opening the New Testament ; all suited to fix our attention, and raise our expectations, respecting the extraordinary character, to whom we are about to be introduced. Here, as in every part of the Gospel, *facts* are simply related, without any studied remarks to awaken our attention : but what *facts* are they ! In the small compass of the first three chapters, we have the genealogy of Jesus traced back to David and Abraham ; the miraculous conception ; the repeated interposition of angels ; the wise men conducted to the scene of these transactions by an extraordinary star ; the fulfilment of prophecies traced in each circumstance ; a forerunner, (himself the subject of repeated prophecy,) coming to prepare the way of the Lord ; and finally, the miraculous appearance, and the voice from heaven, at the baptism of Jesus, announcing him to be "the beloved Son of God." What impressions are these things suited to make ! Yet they are introduced, apparently without any design on the part of the writer, to strike or to affect : they come in of course, as facts which the truth of history required to be related.'

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—6.

The most eminent and useful servants of God often grow up in retired situations, and exercise their ministry in places remote from the busy scenes of life : but where-ever stationed, God will bring those to attend on them, whom he purposes to profit by their labours ; and he can as easily convene large congregations in the desert, as in

CHAP. IV.

Christ, being led by the Spirit into the wilderness, fasts forty days; is tempted by the devil; overcomes him by the word of God, and is ministered to by angels, 1—11. He dwells at Capernaum, and fulfils

a prophecy of Isaiah, by preaching in Galilee, 12—17. He calls Peter, Andrew, James and John, to follow him, 18—22. He teaches in the synagogues, and heals the diseased; so that, his fame being spread abroad, he is followed by great multitudes, 23—25.

populous cities. The world at large, with all its inhabitants, is the kingdom of the wicked one; except as some are translated, by the grace of God, from the power of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son. And all these will soon be received into the realms of felicity, where their King now reigns in glory: but they who remain strangers or enemies to this deliverance, and consequently subjects of Satan, will have their portion with their prince in the region of darkness and despair. This kingdom of God and heaven is come nigh to us, but except it be set up in our hearts we shall not enjoy its blessings: nor can we understand the nature, excellency, and glory of it, except we be broken in spirit with godly sorrow, humbled in true repentance, and taught to hate sin, and to long for deliverance both from its punishment and pollution. The preachers of salvation, therefore, must introduce their message of rich mercy and plenteous redemption, by "the ministration of condemnation," and by showing sinners the nature and necessity of "repentance, and works meet for repentance." Thus prophets and apostles, as well as John the Baptist, "prepared the ways of the LORD," and led sinners to welcome his salvation and submit to his authority; and thus even the King of glory, when he humbled himself to be a Preacher of righteousness, prepared the way for erecting his spiritual kingdom, and for rendering himself precious to the hearts of his hearers.—Modern deviations then from this good old way will not be found improvements upon it: and if repentance were more fully and clearly preached, "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world," would not so often be pointed out in vain; nor would men so much neglect or pervert the Gospel, as they do where this is slightly and superficially attended to. They, who preach repentance, the mortification of worldly lusts, and the renunciation of worldly interests and indulgences, will commonly have success, in some measure proportioned to the degree in which they exemplify their own doctrine. And if they seem nearly as much alive to the pursuit of wealth, or as desirous of the pleasures and decorations of life, as other men, their declamations will have little influence; for their hearers will consider their conduct as a comment on their sermons. Nor can ministers in general be sufficiently independent, to be faithful to all men and in all cases, unless they learn to be content with mean accommodations, and to be frugal and simple in their expenses. Indeed, it is no disgrace, but an honour, to the servant of God, to appear as a poor man, and willing to be poor in his attire, his table, furniture, and every thing belonging to him. They who have not superior wisdom, piety, or holiness, may require external appendages, to preserve them from neglect and contempt: but the man of God, who is devoted to him and furnished for every good work, has a more valuable distinction, and needs them not. But what

a small portion of those, who attend on the most faithful preachers, become the true disciples of Christ! Many are attracted by novelty, or go because others do; and many are brought under transient convictions. They attend on divine ordinances, make confessions of sin, and profess to be disciples; but they have not the true repentance and living faith of real Christians, and in time of temptations they fall away.

V. 7—12.

The servant of God must not judge of men according to outward rank, profession, or reputation; but according to their characters, estimated by the rule of Scripture. None are further from the kingdom of heaven than formalists, who are proud of their own supposed goodness; and infidels, who are elated with an idea of their superiority to vulgar prejudices, and of their pre-eminent knowledge and sagacity. Little do such men suspect, that they are more emphatically the children of the wicked one, and better serve his cause, than the vilest of the profligates whom they disdain; or that they are likely to receive still deeper damnation. Loud, indeed, are their clamours of bigotry, uncharitableness, and fanaticism, when they read such declarations: yet they will find them true, except, (which is not likely,) they take warning, and flee from the wrath to come: and let it be carefully observed, that all the miseries and multiplied triumphs of death, which are the effects of God's displeasure against the sins of men, are entirely distinct from, and not worthy to be compared with, "the wrath to come." Happy are they that take the alarm, and flee for their lives, without loitering, or turning aside; for whether they have heretofore been Pharisees, Sadducees, or publicans, they will not be rejected by the gracious Saviour. Yet unless we bring forth fruits meet for repentance, our profession of Christianity will no more avail us, than the relation of the unbelieving Jews to Abraham did them. The Lord is able to raise up true disciples to Christ from among those who have not yet heard of his name; and he will never spare any man, who works iniquity, nay, who does not work righteousness, on account of his creed, his sect, or his forms of godliness; for "now is the axe laid at the root of the tree; and every tree, that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire." But our hearts cannot be made productive of this good fruit, except the regenerating Spirit of Christ graft the good word of God on them: no outward forms can make us clean: no ordinances, by whomsoever administered, or after whatever mode, can supply the want of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire: this alone can produce that purity of heart, and those exalted and holy affections, which uniformly "accompany salvation." All professed Christians, who are destitute of this inward seal of the

† Job i. 9-12. ii 4-7. Luke XXXIII. 31. 32. i Thes. iii. 1. Heb. x. 10. xii. 9-11. g. iii. 17. Luke iv. 9. h. Gen. iii. 1-5. xxi. 29-34. Ex. xvi. 3. Num. xxi. 4-6. Ps. lxxviii. 17-20. Heb. xii. 16. 17. i. Deut. viii. 4. Luke iv. 4. c. 12. Rom. x. 4. Eph. vi. 17. d. Deut. viii. 3. Luke iv. 4. — i. xvi. 16-21. Ex. xvi. 8. 15. 35. xxiii. 15. 1 Kings viii. 12-16. 2 Kings iv. 42. 44. vii. 1, 2. Hag. ii. 16. 29. Mal. iii. 9-11. Mark vi. 38-44. viii. 4-9. John vi. 9, 10. 31. &c. 63. — a. Luke iv. 9. John xix. 11.

3 And when ^f the tempter came to him, he said, ^g If thou be the Son of God, ^h command that these stones be made bread.

4 But he answered and said, ⁱ It is written, ^k Man shall not live by bread alone, ^l but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

5 Then the devil ^m taketh him up

into ⁿ the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: ^p for it is written, ^q He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in ^r their hands they shall bear thee up, ^s lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Jesus said unto him, ^t It is written again, ^u Thou shalt not tempt the LORD thy God.

V. 3, 4. Satan seems to have before acted as an invisible tempter, suggesting thoughts to the mind of Christ, as he does to those of his people: but now he assumed a visible form, not terrifying, but as a friend, perhaps pretending to be an angel of light. In this assumed character, he proposed to him, that if he were indeed "the Son of God, he should command the stones before him, to be made bread." The subtlety of the tempter appears in the plausibility of the temptation. He did not urge him to create a feast for indulgence; but merely to change a stone into a loaf for his necessity, and to show that he was indeed the Son of God: and where was the harm of this, when he was ready to perish with hunger? Some think, that the temptation was chiefly intended to make him question, whether he were indeed the Son of God: but this seems rather to have been assumed as a kind of principle, about which queries were to be proposed, in something of the same manner as when Eve was tempted by him. (Note, Gen. iii. 1-5.) He might here address Christ, as in a way of surprise. "What, art thou 'the beloved Son of God, and left in this waste desert to perish with hunger! Can it be possible! Is this the love of the Father! Wait no longer on him for a supply, which hath been too long delayed, and of which there is no prospect. The case is urgent; the power inherent in thee; exert thyself, and show thy divinity, by commanding these stones to become bread." This seems to have been the tempter's meaning; but to work a miracle at the suggestion of Satan, to satisfy the craving of the appetite, would have implied hard thoughts of God, distrust of his providence and promise, and a disposition to leave the direct path of duty, and to use improper means of relief; like him, who said, "This evil is of the Lord, why should we wait for the Lord any longer?" We must recollect that Christ, as man, was bound to obey the whole law; and every thing, which would have been in the least sinful for us in similar circumstances, would have been inconsistent with the very end of his coming into the world. The gift of miracles, in Christ, was in many respects a talent: as fulfilling all righteousness for us, as a perfectly holy character, and as setting us a perfect example; it was necessary he should employ this talent wholly for the purposes for which it was intrusted, viz. to confirm his mission and doctrine, to honour the Father, and to do good to men; and not at all to accommodate or relieve himself. For this is the precise difference between holiness and selfishness, in the use of the various gifts of God. It would have been the duty of a prophet, in such a

situation, to have waited patiently, and not to have attempted working a miracle for his own relief, without some immediate intimation from God: and therefore Jesus would by no means attend to such an insidious proposal, but answered the tempter by a plain text of Scripture. (Note, Deut. viii. 3.) The life of man depends on God, and not on his food: he can sustain life without food, but food cannot sustain life without his blessing. To rest upon his promise, and to obey all his precepts, and thus to commend our lives to his keeping, and to suffer any extremity, rather than break his commands, or question the truth of his word, by which alone our lives and souls are secured, and on which they must live, constitutes our duty. This reply therefore repelled the temptation, and the tempter was overcome by "the sword of the Spirit."

V. 5-7. The devil, finding Christ immovably steadfast in confiding in his heavenly Father, changed his method of assault. He conveyed him, (doubtless by his own permission, in whatever way it was effected,) into Jerusalem, which had long been called the holy city; and there he placed him on a pinnacle of the temple, perhaps on the top of the high porch, or steeple, that was at the east end of it: which, as well as the other parts, was surrounded by a battlement, to prevent any from falling, (Deut. xxii. 8:) and then, in proof of his being the Son of God, he pressed him "to cast himself down from thence." This was a public situation, and he might thus at once prove himself the promised Messiah; and it would also, as the tempter meant to insinuate, be the highest evidence of his confidence in God. As our Lord had produced Scripture to refute the former temptation, the tempter supported this with a quotation from the sacred oracles. (Ps. xci. 11, 12.) Whether the words adduced were understood as a promise to believers, or a prophecy relating to Christ, Satan suggested, that they ensured his safety; for if angels were charged with believers, to keep them from dashing their foot against a stone; much more would the Son of God be borne up by them, that he should not be injured by the fall. But he omitted the words "in all thy ways," knowing that an ostentatious casting himself from this battlement was none of the ways marked out for Christ, (or for any believer,) in which he might depend on divine protection. Satan could tempt Christ to cast himself down, but he could not cast him down, for his power was limited. Perhaps he presumed, that he should thus induce Jesus to terminate his own life; at least, compliance with this proposal would have been a needless

1.5 Luke iv. 5—

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XXII. 26. Rom. i.

A. 17. Jer. xliii.

17. 17. Jer. xliii.

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8 Again ^a the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, ^a and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them ;

9 And saith unto him, ^a All these things will I give thee, ^a if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10 Then saith Jesus unto him, ^b Get thee hence, ^c Satan : for it is written,

^d Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11 Then ^a the devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

12 ^a Now ^a when Jesus had heard that John was ^a cast into prison, he departed unto Galilee ;

13 And, ^b leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in ^c Capernaum, which is upon the sea-coast, in the borders of ^d Zabulon and ^e Nephthalim :

14 That ^a it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, ^a saying,

15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, ^b by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, ^c Galilee of the Gentiles :

16 The people ^a which sat in darkness ^a

Mark i. 14, 15.
17 Luke iii. 20.
18 John i. 28.
* Or, delivered up.

A. D. 51.
b Luke ix. 30, 31.
c Mark i. 21. John 4. 23.
d Jer. i. 1.
e Jer. i. 1.

A. D. 51.
b Luke ix. 30, 31.
c Mark i. 21. John 4. 23.
d Jer. i. 1.
e Jer. i. 1.

A. D. 51.
b Luke ix. 30, 31.
c Mark i. 21. John 4. 23.
d Jer. i. 1.
e Jer. i. 1.

may, ostentatious method of showing how entirely God protected him, and an unwarranted requisition of a miracle to be wrought for his preservation. Our Lord, therefore, answered the enemy by another quotation of Scripture, (*Note, Deut. vi. 16.*) which plainly forbids men to tempt the Lord God.—Some indeed contend, that this expression denotes *diffidence* rather than *presumption*, and they produce several texts to prove it; but the meaning in every place seems to be, ‘putting the power, truth, and love of God to an unnecessary trial,’ refusing to believe him, without further evidence than he chooses to give; dictating to him what he should do; questioning whether he could do this, or the other, and resolving not to be satisfied that he could, unless he did; neglecting proper means, running into needless danger, making improper requisitions, expecting unwarranted interpositions.—Thus, if our Lord had cast himself from the temple, it would have been a sort of refusal to believe former attestations, that he was the Son of God, except it were further proved by his miraculous preservation. He would have put himself into circumstances of extreme danger, in expectation of a divine interposition, for which in such a case he could have no warrant: and this would have been “to tempt the Lord,” and a violation of the command in the plain meaning of it.—St. Luke mentions this temptation last; but St. Matthew seems to have observed the order of time, in his narration.

V. 8—11. The devil seems at length to have despaired of success by any covert plausible temptation: he therefore resolved openly to make one bold effort, grounding all his hope of success on the vastness of the recompense, which he meant to propose as the price of transgression. To give the better colour to his artifice, he took the Lord Jesus to the top of an exceedingly high mountain, and thence showed him the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. This must have been an illusion upon the imagination, over which Satan seems to have peculiar influence: for it is naturally impossible that all the kingdoms of the world could be seen at once; as by far the greatest part of them must have been beneath the visible horizon. However, they were presented to the mind of Christ, as if he had seen them with his eyes: with all the wealth, magnificence, and honour, which appear glorious

in the eyes of men. And Satan impudently pretended, that all these were absolutely at his disposal, and that he was so pleased with Jesus, that he was ready to put him into immediate possession of them, provided he would do him homage for them, by one *single* prostration, and *transient* act of worship. Doubtless Satan is permitted to use worldly things as his baits, with which to allure his votaries: but nothing could be more audaciously false, than to pretend that the Lord had receded from his providential government of the world, that the devil might absolutely dispose of it as he pleased; especially as he spake to him, by whom kings reign; and nothing could be more arrogant, than to require the incarnate Son of God to worship him. Whatever disguise this ambitious spirit had before assumed, (for we suppose him to have been the great leader of the whole army of apostate angels,) he was now made manifest, and his diabolical designs also: Christ therefore addressed him by his name, Satan, the adversary of God and man, and commanded him to depart immediately; for it was written, “thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” (*Marg. Ref.*) The Saviour in this spake as man, to whom it was absolutely forbidden to worship any other but God only.—Thus the great enemy was baffled, and left the Redeemer, ceasing for a season to renew his temptations. And then holy angels came, as it were, to congratulate him on his victory, to do him honour, and to minister to his wants. From these words, (10,) compared with other like Scriptures, it appears, that Christ is not a creature, because the worship and service due to God alone cannot be duly given to a creature; that being to own him equal in dignity with God; and the sin of idolatry chiefly consisting in giving that worship to a creature which is due only to the God of heaven. And therefore *religious adoration* cannot be given, without idolatry, to Christ, provided he be only a creature.—Seeing then that God doth require, “that all men should worship the Son, even as they worship the Father,” and “when he brought the First-born into the world, said, Let all the angels of God worship him;” and seeing this is the character of Christians, that they “serve the Lord Christ;” it is certain that he cannot be a creature only, but must be truly God. (*Whitby.*)

q John iii. 5. x. 12.
xxviii. 22. Ps.
xliii. 19. Jer. xlii.
10. Am. v. 8.
Mark i. 14.
i. iii. 2. ix. 13. x.
7. Mark i. 15.
Luke v. 32. 156.
2. x. 11-14. xv.
7. 10. xxiv. 47.
Acts ii. 38. 157.
x. 18. xxviii.
20. xx. 21. xxvi.
20. 2 Tim. ii. 25.
Rev. vi. 1.
x. 12. xlii. 11.
19. 24. 47. xxv. 1.
u Mark i. 16-18.
x. xv. 29. xxiii.
xxviii. 11. Dou.
iii. 17. Chinner-
et. Luke v. 1.
x. 16. Gen. 1.
xxi. 1. sea of
Tiberias.
y. 2. Luke vi.
14. John i. 40. 41.
vi. 8.
Ex. iii. 1. 10.
Judg. vi. 11. 12.
1 Kings xix. 19-
21. Is. lxxviii. d
70-72. Am. vii.
11. 15. 1 Cor. 1.
47-29.

17 From ^a that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, ^b Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

18 ¶ And Jesus, ^a walking by the ^a sea of Galilee, saw ^y two brethren, Simon, called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: ^z for they were fishers.

19 And he saith unto them, ^a Follow me, and ^b I will make you fishers of men.

20 And ^c they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

a. ix. 22. ix. 9. xvi. 24. xix. 21. Mark ii. 14. Luke v. 27. 156.
b. John i. 43. 156. xxi. 22. — b. Ez. xlvii. 9. 10. Mark i. 17. 18. Luke v. 10. 11. c. x. 17. 38. xix. 27. 1 Kings xix. 21. Ps. cxix. 60. Mark x. 28. 29. Luke xviii. 28-30. Gal. i. 16. — d. x. 2. xvii. 1. xx. 20. 21. xxvi. 37. Mark i. 19. 157. 17. v. 37. Luke v. 10. 11. John xxi. 2. Acts xii. 2.

V. 12-17. Not long after John had baptized Christ, he gave offence to Herod the Tetrarch; and, being cast into prison, he terminated his ministry, and soon after ended his short but useful life. It is, however, evident that Jesus had entered upon his ministry, and become eminent, a considerable time before John was cast into prison; (*John* iii. 24-36.) But at that time he began to preach more fully and openly in the northern part of the land. He had perhaps been at Jerusalem at some solemn feast, when this account was brought to him; and he immediately departed for Galilee; and then leaving his habitation at Nazareth, (Joseph perhaps being dead, as we read no more of him,) he took up his ordinary abode at Capernaum, a city upon the borders of the two lots assigned to the tribes of Zabulon and Nephthali, upon the coast of the sea of Galilee, or Tiberias. This was done, in order to fulfil Isaiah's prophecy; (*Notes*, Is. ix. 1, 2.) Thus in this remote corner of the land, in Galilee of the Gentiles, that is, bordering on them, where the greatest darkness had prevailed, so that it was as "the region of the shadow of death," the glorious light of the Gospel sprang up and shone forth, when Jesus began to preach the same doctrine, which John had preached in another part of the land. Stronger language could not be employed in describing even the deplorable ignorance of the Gentiles. (*Note*, iii. 1, 2.) This part of Galilee was not far distant from Tyre: and Solomon had given Hiram, king of Tyre, twenty cities in that neighbourhood. (*1 Kings* ix. 11.)

V. 18-22. Jesus had, a considerable time before this, been acknowledged as the Messiah by Andrew and Peter; but they had not been required to forsake their ordinary employments and to follow him constantly, with a view to the ministry and apostleship. (*John* i. 35-42.) They were all fishermen. Simon and Andrew were brethren and partners, and were employed in casting their net: but

22 And ^c they immediately left the ship, and their father, and followed him.

23 ¶ And ^a Jesus went about all Galilee, ^b teaching in their synagogues, and preaching ^b the Gospel of the kingdom, ⁱ and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease, among the people.

24 And ^b his fame went throughout all ¹ Syria; and they brought unto him ^m all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were ⁿ possessed with devils, and those which were ^o lunatic, and ^p those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

25 And there ^q followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from ^r Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan.

a. ix. 32. xii. 22. xv. 22. xvii. 18. Mark v. 2-18. Luke iv. 33-35. viii. 27-37. Acts 28. o xviii. 15. — p viii. 6. 13. ix. 2-8. — q. v. i. viii. 1. xii. 18. xix. 2. Mark iii. 7. v. 2. Luke vi. 17. — r Mark v. 20. vii. 31.

Jesus called them to leave it, and to follow him, and assured them they should be "fishers of men." They would be employed in bringing men out of the world and its vanities, to Christ and salvation, by means of the Gospel, even as they had been, in bringing the fishes out of the sea with their nets; and they would need the same kind of skill, self-denial, endurance of hardships, assiduity, regard to times and opportunities, and patience, which they had been used before to exercise. This call was accompanied with such power, that without delay they left all, and followed him. And going on, he saw two other brethren of the same occupation, who were mending their nets, (for they were all diligently employed;) and at his call they also left all, even their aged father, to follow Christ, trusting in Providence for a precarious subsistence in this new employment. Zebedee might be a disciple, though not called to this service, but left to continue in his former occupation. The miraculous draught of fishes, related by St. Luke, probably took place about this time, either before, or soon after, the events here recorded. (*Notes*, Luke v. 1-11. *Marg. Ref.*)

V. 23-25. Jesus, having procured these attendants, not from the schools or palaces of Jerusalem, but from the fisher-boats of Galilee, went about preaching the Gospel in their synagogues, or places of worship, which were something like our parish-churches. Wherever he went, he confirmed his divine mission by a variety of benevolent miracles, which were also emblems of the healing efficacy of his doctrine, and the influences of the Spirit which accompanied it. So that his fame spread abroad into the adjacent region of Syria, as well as into all the parts of the land of Israel: multitudes therefore brought their sick unto him, and he healed them all, at the same time instructing them in the way of salvation. We shall have a better opportunity of discussing many subjects, relating to these diseases, possessions, lunatics, &c. when we

CHAP. V.

Christ sheweth who are happy, 1—12.

His disciples, as "the salt of the earth" and the light of the world," and, as resembling "a city set on a hill" and a can-

dle in a room, must be bright examples in good works, 13—16. He came not to destroy, but to fulfil and establish the law, 17—20. The sixth commandment, vindicated from corrupt glosses, and

come to particular instances: only observing, that this beneficent display of our Lord's divine power both marked the gracious design of his undertaking, and excited the attention of the people to his doctrine. (*Marg. Ref.*)—It should, however, be noticed, that persons possessed with devils are here expressly distinguished from lunatics; and could not then be exactly the same, as some skeptical learned men seem to think. 'It seems strange to find men, at this distance of time, questioning the truth of that, which neither Pharisees nor Sadducees then doubted of, or ever did object against, the pretensions of Christ and his apostles to cast out devils.' (*Whitby.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—4.



Retirement, fasting, meditation, and devotion, are suitable preparations for the important work of the ministry; and they, who are led by the Holy Spirit to take this office upon them, will seek communion with God, and a blessing from him, in the use of every means of grace. Yet we must not yield to discouragement, if, when we thus seek to commune with God, we should be peculiarly assaulted by the temptations of the devil. That subtle enemy often leaves the negligent and slothful unmolested, but when we seek to glorify God and do good, or to enjoy communion with him, Satan will be sure to assault us, as far as he is permitted: and the Lord is often pleased to permit him, either to counterbalance our comforts, or to prove the reality and power of our grace. The enemy also knows how to avail himself of outward circumstances; and whether we be full, or hungry, he can graft his temptations on them. The Lord could, if he saw good, suspend the cravings of our appetites; but as this is not his ordinary method, they are guilty of presumption, who attempt such degrees of abstinence as render their appetites more unruly, and thus expose themselves to temptation: yet the trial of our faith and love sometimes consists in bearing patiently the cravings of nature, rather than remove them by committing the least sin. Satan is too artful to assault at first established believers, in the full exercise of faith and love, with temptations to evident and gross iniquities. He is most dangerous to *them* when most plausible; and when his temptations seem to be good and friendly hints, tending to something profitable without evident criminality. He often, in a very specious manner, tempts men to unbelief; or harasses their minds with groundless fears and perplexities. He suggests to the poor, or afflicted, that if they were indeed the children of God, surely they would not be left to such suffering, or to experience such straits; thus insinuating hard thoughts of God, as if he were unkind or unfaithful. Sometimes he affrights the mind with gloomy prospects of still greater difficulties; and represents trusting in the Lord with scrupulous conscientiousness as leading to distress and ruin.

By his emissaries he persuades men, that some compliances must be made, and deviations admitted, or else they must starve: or he tries to embolden them to venture on some convenient or gainful sin, because they are the children of God, and there is no danger of their being cast off for it. In these and numberless other ways he tempts us to impatience, distrust, or sinful expedients of deliverance from trouble; and, in opposition to their principles, to prefer sin to suffering. And, having a party within us, we too often listen to his soothing flatteries, and are induced to dishonour our profession, or at least, to honour it less than we ought to do. But "the sword of the Spirit" is that warranted weapon, which Satan cannot stand against; and it is our wisdom to answer all suggestions with "Thus it is written." Let God be true, and every man a liar: our dependence is wholly on the Lord; his word of promise is our stable support, his precept is our infallible rule. By these men live; and whilst we lean on an express promise, and obey the plain precept, we must be safe, whatever appearances may be against us. "Our Father knoweth what things we have need of;" and sooner all nature shall recede from its course, than any of his promises shall fail of accomplishment.

V. 5—7.



When Satan sees men staying their hearts on God in steadfast faith, and adhering to their duty in the midst of difficulties, determined rather to suffer than to seek relief by sin, he can change his ground, to tempt them to neglect proper means, or to thrust themselves uncalled into dangers and difficulties, expecting the Lord to help them out: taking advantage of their reverence for the Scriptures, he knows how, plausibly, to support these suggestions by texts which *seem* to give countenance to this unwarranted confidence. "The Lord will provide;" and therefore the believer need not defraud, or break the sabbath, in order to a maintenance: but Satan will tempt him further to infer, that he may be negligent, improvident, or extravagant; and that even in that case, God hath engaged to provide for him. His children shall be kept from final apostasy; and therefore they need not be dejected by the consciousness of their own weakness, or by the prospect of strong temptations: but the enemy will suggest, that they need not watch and pray; that they may venture into perilous situations; that they may ostentatiously court difficulty, and thrust themselves into danger, and then expect God to preserve them. Satan and his instruments have a peculiar advantage in such cases, by partial, or distorted, quotations of Scripture, when the comfort or privilege is separated from the character or duty annexed. The believer shall "be preserved in all his ways;" but by keeping out of sight the concluding words, Christians are often seduced *out of their way*, and expect to be preserved in places and companies where they have no business; and many persons are deluded into a false persuasion that they are preserved by

spiritually expounded and enforced, 21—26; and the seventh, 27—32; and the third, 33—37. Exhortations, to

suffer wrong patiently, 38—42; to love our enemies, 43—47; and to aim at perfection, 48.

such mutilated quotations. But let all men beware of thus mangling Scripture; and be upon their guard against those, who produce part of a text, and leave out some emphatical words, which contradict the end for which they quoted it. Godly men may do this in the heat of argument, or through inattention; but they follow a hateful precedent, and it tends to great mischief, and is a powerful engine in the hands of those who oppose the truth.—Let us also recollect that the tempter has no objection to holy places, as the scene of his assaults; nay, he often chooses them, for the sake of plausibility: but he delights in high places, to which he would gladly exalt those, of whose labours he is afraid, that he might cast them down with the more fatal fall: and he peculiarly urges men to presumption and ostentation. The perversion of Scripture made by numbers should not induce us to neglect it; but by plain texts, used in their obvious meaning, we must answer temptations grounded on its misapplication. We should ever remember, that we trust to the Lord, when we expect his protection in the path of duty; but tempt him, if we wilfully deviate from it, presuming on his care of us.

V. 8—11.

The believer should not despond, if assaulted by the most horrible temptations to infidelity, blasphemy, suicide, or any other dreadful crime: as Christ himself was tempted to ambition, and even to worship the devil. The more such suggestions pain us, the less likely they are to defile us; even as the bad language, which wounds our ears and grieves our hearts, proportionably does not pollute us.—By long observation, and deep penetration, our enemy knows how powerfully the prospect of authority, honour, and greatness, with such glories as the kingdoms of the earth contain, attract the minds of men. It was indeed a vain presumption in him, to suppose that the holy heart of our divine Redeemer could be thus attracted. But we are all by nature prone to seize on such supposed advantages; to forget that the Lord alone disposes of them; to mistake these illusions of the imagination for substantial good, and to render Satan any service, that may be required as the price of obtaining them. Alas! we find but very few men, who, in all instances, decidedly and with indignant abhorrence silence every proposal of this kind. Yet “what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” Conscious therefore of our weakness, we should pray that we may not be led into temptation, and be thankful to be kept out of the way of it: for numbers, who seemed to run well, have given up religion for a very small portion of the world; and many believers have been greatly hindered and pierced with bitter anguish, by yielding to these alluring suggestions. Let us then beware of covetousness and ambition; store our minds with the precious words of God; and remember to “worship the Lord,” and serve him alone, and not attempt to divide our heart between him and Mammon, which will be as ruinous as more gross idolatry. Where temptations are strong, and the evil proposed evident, we must

not parley for a moment: for the soul that deliberates is already vanquished. Whilst we admire the condescension and patience of the incarnate Son of God, in suffering himself to be conveyed from place to place by this foul fiend, that as our Surety he might conquer him; let us learn to copy his example and to pursue his victories, taking encouragement from the consideration, that our exalted Redeemer ‘knows what sore temptations mean,’ and that, “he suffered being tempted, that he might be able to succour them that are tempted.” Let us observe the honourable issue of his conflict; how angels ministered to him, who refused Satan’s counsel to supply his own wants; and how “all power in heaven and earth are given to him,” who refused the proffer of all the kingdoms of the world, and all the glory of them. If we resist the devil, he will flee from us, and the Lord will give his angels charge over us likewise; and if we refuse honours and preferments purchased by sin, we shall obtain a kingdom in heaven that cannot be moved. Let us then fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life.

V. 12—25.

Our services and trials are alike short. When one instrument is laid aside, the Lord calls forth others: and when such as have been useful are taken to their rest, we should redouble our diligence in the cause of God. Those places are highly favoured, where the pure Gospel is preached. Till that blessing is vouchsafed, the people “sit in darkness and the shadow of death.” This was the case of the Jews, as well as the Gentiles; and is, even at this day, that of nominal Christians in very many places, as well as of Pagans and Mahometans: but when the word of truth is faithfully declared, they “see a great light:” may all such walk in the light, as the children of the light; and may that blessed light be vouchsafed to all the regions of the earth! All who preach the Gospel must deliver the same message, and call men to repentance, that they may share the blessings and bring forth the fruits of salvation. Next to the duties of religion, honest industry is most valuable; and they are more likely to become useful ministers of Christ, who have spent their youth in laborious self-denying occupations, than they, who, professing to be students, waste their time in worldly pleasures, and in contracting habits of dissipation, sloth, delicacy, and self-indulgence: and even shepherds, husbandmen, or builders, may stand as fair to take good care of the Lord’s flock, husbandry, or building, as these fishers to become “fishers of men;” provided he is pleased to call them to it. However, let none despise instruction, learning, or preparation for the ministry: Christ himself became the tutor of those whom he sent forth to preach his Gospel; and, having taught them heavenly wisdom from his own lips, he gave them the knowledge of languages by miracle, that they might be fully qualified for their work. When he speaks to the heart, men leave all and follow him: and even the demand of parents to our care and attention is subordinate to his right to our services, and to

1. 14, 15. Joel
1. 19. 2 Sam.
1. 26. Job
1. 22. 18.
1. 23. xxxv. 26. Ali 1. 4. xxi 4, 5, 9. Prov. xi 17. xiv 21. xix 17. 18. Job 11. 2.
Ali 6-12. Dan 10. 27. Mic 6. 8. Mark xi 25. 26. Luke vi 35, 36. Eph. iv 32 v. 1.
2. Cor. iii 12. Jam. ii 17. —o Hos. i. 6. ii 1. Marg. 23. Rom. xi 30, 31. 1 Cor. vii
2. 2. Cor. iv. 1. 1 Tim. i. 13. 16. 2 Tim. 1. 16-18. Heb. iv. 16. vi 10. Jam. ii. 13. 1 Pet.
2. 10.

7 Blessed ^a are the merciful: ^a for they
shall obtain mercy.

possible, at any price, and by any hardship or peril. The desire of riches, honours, pleasures, knowledge, &c. when very vehement, are often described by such metaphors, which denote both men's eagerness in seeking, and pleasure in obtaining the desired object. But they, who hunger and thirst after these things, can only obtain a temporary gratification, and are liable to eternal dissatisfaction. They only are happy, who hunger and thirst after righteousness; that is, after God, and his favour, image, and the holy felicity to be enjoyed in his service; who know the nature, excellency, and value of such blessings; who choose and seek them in the first place; who subordinate all other interests and pleasures to them; who will not put up with any thing short of them; who value every thing in proportion as it tends to them; who are dissatisfied with every attainment hitherto made; and more grieved that they are not more holy, than because they are poor, sick, or neglected; and who long above all things for perfect holiness and happiness in the favour and service of God. The new covenant is so constituted, that persons of this character cannot fail to seek and find the righteousness after which they hunger and thirst: for the Holy Spirit that excited this spiritual appetite will lead them to Christ, that it may be satisfied; they will accept of his salvation, and receive from his fulness of grace; they will obtain a measure of the desired felicity on earth: and when all others will be torn from the object of their choice, then, and not before, they "will be filled;" that is, as firmly established in the enjoyment of the divine love, and as entirely perfected in holiness, as they can desire: and this shall continue for ever; "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more."—"The righteousness here mentioned is by some thought to be "the righteousness of faith," by which, we, being justified, or freed from the guilt of sin, have peace with God; and this undoubtedly is a fit matter of our spiritual thirst and hunger: but yet I think this cannot be the proper import of the words. 1. Because the word *righteousness* bears no such sense in the Gospel, but only in the epistles of St. Paul. 2. Because the Jews, to whom Christ speaks, had no idea of this righteousness, no apprehension that their Messiah was to die, and much less that they should be justified by his death; and therefore, had Christ spoken of this righteousness, none of them could have understood his meaning.' (Whitby).—It is not necessary to give an unreserved approbation to every clause in this quotation, in order to perceive that the general argument is conclusive against this systematical interpretation of the beatitude, and against a similar explanation of some other passages in our Lord's discourses.

V. 7. Connected with the preceding holy tempers, is that of *mercy*, or compassion, tenderness, and love; an aversion to every thing harsh, cruel, oppressive, or injurious; a propensity to pity, alleviate, or remove, the miseries of mankind; an unwillingness to increase personal emolument or indulgence, by rendering others uneasy: a willingness to forego personal ease, interest, or gratifi-

8 Blessed ^a are the pure in heart: ^a for
they shall see God.

1. 14, 15. Joel
1. 19. 2 Sam.
1. 26. Job
1. 22. 18.
1. 23. xxxv. 26. Ali 1. 4. xxi 4, 5, 9. Prov. xi 17. xiv 21. xix 17. 18. Job 11. 2.
Ali 6-12. Dan 10. 27. Mic 6. 8. Mark xi 25. 26. Luke vi 35, 36. Eph. iv 32 v. 1.
2. Cor. iii 12. Jam. ii 17. —o Hos. i. 6. ii 1. Marg. 23. Rom. xi 30, 31. 1 Cor. vii
2. 2. Cor. iv. 1. 1 Tim. i. 13. 16. 2 Tim. 1. 16-18. Heb. iv. 16. vi 10. Jam. ii. 13. 1 Pet.
2. 10.

cation, to make them easy and happy: this seems the general meaning of the word *merciful*. There is, however, a natural propensity of this kind, which should be carefully distinguished from the gracious disposition. This is not expansive, habitual, general: it is profuse to some, and cruel to others: it does not spring from proper motives, it is not directed to proper ends, nor governed by a respect to the rule of the divine law: it is often joined with impiety, injustice, excessive indulgence, and even tyranny, in other parts of a man's conduct: and, in short, it is a sort of *instinct*, which is stronger in some men than in others, and has no connexion with true religion. But the mercy, to which the blessing is annexed, has respect to the authority, law, and glory of God, and to the grace of the Gospel: it is learned by looking to the cross of Christ, and the mercy of God to sinners through him: it is uniform in its exercise, and seeks the good both of men's bodies and souls, and extends to the vile, the injurious, the mean, and obscure, and to every one of the human species, however distinguished, as far as he falls under its sphere of action. It is connected with humility, faith, self-denial, equity, piety, and universal conscientiousness; and it induces a man, from love to God and hope in his mercy, to love, compassionate, and do good to all men, as he hath time and opportunity: not allowing himself to injure any; but wishing and praying for the happiness of those whom he cannot reach, or help. Such persons are happy, for they shall obtain mercy. All are sinners, and need mercy: these are penitent believing sinners, and are interested in the mercy and grace of the covenant: the Lord will compassionate and be kind to them, according to their conduct towards their brethren: they shall be pardoned, supported, and comforted through life, and in death; and then shall enjoy "the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life;" but, on the contrary, "they shall have judgment without mercy, who have showed no mercy." Even in this world, the exercise of mercy and beneficence constitutes one of the most eligible employments, of which our nature is capable. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 8. Men are apt to think those happy, who have it in their power to gratify every ambitious, covetous, or sensual inclination, without restraint or limitation: and probably the carnal Jews expected such indulgences under the reign of their Messiah. But, on the contrary, he pronounced those happy, who are "pure in heart;" in whose hearts all carnal, sensual, and sinful desires are so mortified and subdued, that they do not seek their gratification; who are inwardly replenished with holy inclinations and affections; and influenced by the fear and love of God, in their habitual conduct. The believer's understanding is in part purified from darkness, his judgment from error, his will from rebellion, his affections from enmity, avarice, pride, sensuality; his memory and imagination from the depraved thoughts and recollections which once occupied them; and his leading aim is to glorify God, obey his will, enjoy his favour, and do good. This is indeed imperfect in this world; but the remainder of sin and pollution forms his

20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

21 ¶ Ye have heard that it was said * by them of old time, † Thou shalt not kill: * and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

† Gen. ix. 6. Ex. xx. 13. Deut. v. 17. — Ex. xxi. 12-14. Num. xxxv. 12-15-21. 30-34. Deut. xxi. 7-9. 1 Kings ii. 5, 6, 31, 32.

22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, † Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

† Gen. iv. 5, 6. xxvii. 9. 1 Sam. xiii. 27. 28. xviii. 6, 9. xx. 30-33. xxv. 12. Eccl. i. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

V. 19. The Scribes and Pharisees made many nice distinctions between great and small commandments, (as the papists do between mortal and venial sins:) but all the law is enacted by the same divine authority, and no part of it can in that sense be of small obligation; though some parts may respect more important matters than others. But if a man, pretending to be Christ's disciple, by any misconstruction of his doctrine should encourage himself in allowed disobedience to the holy law of God, though in a matter of the least importance, and, by any false doctrine or assumed authority, should teach others to do the same, whatever his station in the Church, or reputation among men, might be; he should be called by Christ the least in his kingdom; either no true disciple at all, or one of the most inconsistent and mean of the whole company. On the other hand, he, whose practice and doctrine tend to lead men to keep God's commandments, from proper principles and from evangelical purposes, will be accounted great and honourable in the kingdom of heaven, however men may disesteem him; and the King will approve, employ, and prefer him.—This most conclusively shows that all views of evangelical truth, which verge in the smallest degree to antinomianism, are utterly inconsistent with the true doctrine of Christ. These are indeed altogether as antichristian, as popish dispensations and indulgences: they lead to the same place by another road; they tend to relax man's obligation to obey God; and to dishonour that law, which Christ came into the world, and died on the cross, to magnify and make honourable!

V. 20. The Scribes were the doctors and teachers of the law and the traditions among the Jews, and most of them were Pharisees. (Marg. Ref.) Their learning chiefly related to those external matters, of which the pharisaical righteousness consisted; and the Scribes and Pharisees at that time made the highest profession of religion, and were accounted peculiarly strict, both in their instructions and practice. But our Lord, in setting up his kingdom, declared that he would not acknowledge any one as his subject, whose righteousness did not exceed theirs. Indeed, a new creation to holiness, and the effect of that change on a man's temper and conduct, constitute a righteousness of heart and life, far more excellent than that of the Scribes and Pharisees; even as much as heaven is higher than the earth. Without repentance and faith, we cannot enter Christ's kingdom; these produce hatred of sin, and love of God and man; thus the believer is

taught by the grace of God to "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this world;" and without this, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heavenly glory. Nay, how late in life soever a man is converted, and becomes a true believer, he actually possesses a far better personal righteousness, before he enters heaven, than that of any formalist in the world.—The Scribes and Pharisees 'seem to have taught, that the precepts of the law extended only to the outward actions; that a zeal in the ceremonial parts of religion would excuse moral defects and irregularities; and that some important privileges were inseparably connected with a descent from Abraham.—It has been commonly said by the Jews, that if but two men were to enter into the kingdom of heaven, one of them would be a Pharisee, and the other a Scribe.' (Dodridge.) It may be added, that the zeal and strictness of the Scribes and Pharisees, both in doctrine and practice, were chiefly shown about their own traditions, by which they made void the law of God; and about minute observances, by which they covered over their neglect of judgment, mercy, and faith, or the love of God and man. And in this they have been imitated by vast multitudes in all succeeding ages.

V. 21, 22. To illustrate his meaning, the divine Teacher proceeded to vindicate several of the commandments of the moral law from the corrupt and partial interpretation put upon them by the Scribes; which tended to show, that their rule of righteousness itself was beneath even the actual attainments of his disciples. It had been said by, or to, them of old time, "Thou shalt not kill." (Note, Ex. xx. 13.) God had of old given the law; and the tradition of the elders had made this gloss upon it, "whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment:" by this it was implied, that nothing, except actual murder, was prohibited, and that this was to be avoided, mainly, from dread of the capital punishment to be inflicted by the magistrate. Thus they explained away the extensive spiritual import of the command; and led the people to overlook the awful curse of God denounced against transgressors. But Christ, the great Lawgiver and Judge, speaking with less terror, but not less authority, than when he delivered the commandments from mount Sinai, declared, that "whosoever was angry with his brother without cause, would be in danger of the judgment." All excessive anger must be proportionably without cause; and all that settles into revenge, or vents itself in words and actions, contrary to the law of loving our neighbour as ourselves.

u Will a xxviii. 10.
Deut. xvi. 16.
17. 1 Sam. xv.
xx. 14. 10-17.
Hos. vi. 6. Am.
v. 21-24.
q Gen. xli. 9 xlii.
23-30. 1. 13-17.
Lev. vi. 2-6.
1 Kings ii. 44.
Jam. iii. 20 Ex.
xxi. 63. Luke
xii. 8.
F xxiii. 15-17.
Job xli. 1 Prov.
xxx. 5. Mark. ix.
60 Rom. xii. 17, 18. 1 Cor. vii. 7, 8. 1 Tim. ii. 8. Jam. iii. 13-18 v. 16. 1 Pet. iii. 7, 8.
s xxvii. 25. 1 Cor. xi. 28. — 1 Gen. xxxii. 3-8. 13-22 xxxiii. 3-11. 1 Sam. xxv. 17-25 Prov. vi. 1-9. xxv. 8. Luke xii. 58. xiv. 31, 32.

23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee;

24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, lest thou art in the way with him;

lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

26 Verily, I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence; till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

u Job xxxii. 2. Ps. xxxii. 6. 14. 1v. 6. 7. Luke xii. 24. 25. 2 Cor. vi. 2. Heb. ii. 7. 13. xii. 17. 2 Kings xlii. 25. 27.

y xlviii. 34. xxi. 41. 46. Luke xii. 69. xvi. 26. 7. Heb. i. 9. 3. Jam. ii. 13.

We ought to be angry at sin in ourselves and others, and to show our disapprobation of it, according to our relation to the offender: we should seek his humiliation and reformation by proper means; but not his hurt in any respect, at least not in our private capacity. Inferiors, servants, juniors, are all brethren in this sense; and he that is angry at another without cause, or above cause, "shall be in danger of the judgment;" it is a sin deserving of a punishment more terrible than that inflicted by the ordinary courts of justice on the murderer; and consequently it calls for repentance, and needs the mercy and forgiveness of the new covenant. Moreover, whosoever uses contemptuous, or opprobrious, language, in the heat of his passion, calling his brother "an empty worthless fellow," or "a wicked and abandoned profligate," and such like, would be in danger of punishment proportionably more severe, according to the degree of virulence, or malignity, contained in such revilings. The different courts of justice, and the different kinds of punishment in use among the Jews, are supposed to be referred to in these expressions. By one court, it is said, the criminal was condemned to be beheaded; by another stoned; and by another burned in the valley of the Son of Hinnom, which was considered as a sort of type or emblem of the fire of hell. The original word is Gehennah, which is Hebrew, or Syriac, and signifies the valley of Hinnom. There idolaters burnt their children to Moloch; and, after this abominable practice was put a stop to, the valley was by every means rendered as filthy and vile as possible, and a fire was there constantly burning, to consume the rubbish carried thither; and, at length, it is reported that it became a place of execution for criminals.—Hence this place, being so many ways execrable,—it came to be translated to signify the place of the damned, as the most accursed, execrable, and abominable of all places. (Mede.) The word is frequently used in the New Testament; and always for hell, or the place of final punishment or misery. (29. xviii. 9. Mark ix. 43. 45. 47. Greek.) (Note, Is. xxx. 33.) Of this punishment the conduct above described was deserving, and to this the criminal would be exposed, according to the degree of his crime, unless repentance and forgiveness intervened. This shows both the need which all have of the Gospel, and the strictness of the believer's rule of duty. (Marg. Ref.) These words, vain and foolish, when used by men assisted by the spirit of God, or speaking by virtue of their office, out of a spirit of charity, and an ardent desire to make men sensible of their folly, do not make men obnoxious to this guilt, (Gal. iii. 1. James ii. 20;) but only when they proceed from causeless anger,—or ill will towards

them. (Whitby.)—Minerva, in Homer, forbids Achilles striking Agamemnon; yet gives him leave to reproach him, and counsels to contumelious words. (Hammond.)—This is heathen, or classical, morality!

V. 23, 24. Attention to expensive externals was often used as a compensation, or dispensation, for injustice; and this the selfish priests encouraged, as it tended to their profit. But if any of Christ's disciples should bring an oblation to the altar of God, and, even after he arrived there, should recollect that his brother had any just cause of complaint against him, he must not presume to offer his sacrifice, till he had gone, without delay, and made restitution for the injury done, or acknowledgment of the offence committed; and, by all proper means and reasonable concessions, sought forgiveness and reconciliation. Nor must he, on this account, omit, or long postpone, his intended sacrifice; but leave it before the altar, and return as soon as this previous matter was settled, and then offer it in confidence of acceptance with God. This is spoken of, in the language of the dispensation then in force; but it is equally applicable to Christian ordinances, especially to the Lord's supper. Restitution to the injured, (where practicable,) and concessions to those whom we have offended, as well as forgiveness of injuries, are requisite preparatives to the profitable and comfortable attendance on that sacred ordinance; but to neglect attendance for want of this preparation, is excusing disobedience to God, by injustice and malice towards man. The rule is, "first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

V. 25, 26. The rule of the preceding verses naturally introduced the case of those, who were exposed to law-suits, as having injured their neighbours. In such circumstances, it would be a man's prudence and duty, quickly to compromise the matter with his legal opponent, though the terms might appear rigorous, and to settle the business ere it came before the magistrate; lest, being found culpable, he should be cast into prison for costs and damages, and continue there till the last farthing were paid.—But under this prudential counsel, a far more important instruction is couched. Our injurious conduct towards men, (as well as our other sins,) renders us liable to the wrath of God, who is our Adversary at law. We are on the way to his judgment seat; our time may be short; a way of reconciliation is revealed: we should avail ourselves of it immediately. If this be neglected, the cause will come to a trial, the sinner will be condemned by the Judge, delivered to the executors of vengeance, and cast into the prison of hell: and seeing that he can never make satisfaction to offended justice, or pay all his debt, (especially as new crimes will continue

Ex. xxi. 14. Lev. x. 10. Deut. v. 19. xlii. 22-24. Prov. vi. 27. 22. 32. vii. 28. 29.

Gen. xxxix. 7. Ac. Ex. xi. 17. 2 Sam. xi. 2. Job xxxi. 1. 9. Prov. vi. 25. Jam. i. 14. 15. 2 Pet. ii. 14. 1 John ii. 16.

Ps. cxix. 96. Rom. vii. 7. 8. 14. xlii. 9. Mark ix. 43-49.

Or. do cause thee to offend. c. xix. 12. Rom. vi. 6. ciii. 13. Cor. ix. 27. Gal. v. 24. Col. iii. 5. 1 Pet. iv. 1-3. — xvi. 26. Prov. v. 8-14. Mark viii. 36. Luke ix. 24, 25.

27 ¶ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But ^aI say unto you, ^bThat whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, ^chath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29 And ^dif thy right eye * offend thee, ^epluck it out, and cast it from thee: ^ffor it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not ^gthat thy whole body should be cast into hell.

30 And if thy right hand * offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not ^hthat thy whole body should be ⁱcast into hell.

31 It hath been said, ^jWhosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorce;

32 But ^kI say unto you, That ^lwhosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery.

x. xi. 6. xlii. 21. xlii. 23. xlii. 6. 7. xxvi. 31. Luke xlii. 2. Rom. ix. 32. xiv. 20. 21. 1 Cor. vii. 13. Gal. v. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 8. h. xlii. 13. xxv. 30. Luke xlii. 5. x. xix. 7. Deut. xxiv. 1-4. Jer. iii. 1. Mark x. 2-4.

k. 23. Luke ix. 26. 35. x. xi. 6. 9. 9. Mal. ii. 14-16. Mark x. 5-12. Luke xlii. 18. 1 Cor. vii. 4.

ally enhance the score,) so he cannot expect to be enlarged any more for ever. * Here it is insinuated, how much * more it concerns us, in time, to repent of our offences, * and to endeavour to be reconciled unto him, lest we be * cast into the infernal prison.' (*Whitby.*)

V. 27, 28. The Pharisees interpreted the seventh commandment merely as a prohibition of actual adultery with a married woman: but Christ showed that its spiritual import reached to the thoughts and desires of the heart. For instance, if a man should allow himself to gaze at a woman, till thoughts of a criminal intercourse were excited, he would be deemed an adulterer in his heart, and deserve the punishment denounced against adulterers: and his guilt would be still more aggravated, if he indulged the licentious imagination, actually purposed, and devised means for gratifying his desires, though he should by any means be prevented. We cannot suppose that this prohibits a man from looking at a woman, whom he may lawfully marry, with such a predilection as to desire to possess her in marriage. The inclination for that which is not sinful, can only become sinful by being inordinate; but it may often be attended with such things as are greatly polluting and criminal. (*Note, Ex. xx. 14.*)— 'The expositors of the law said, If a man sees a woman, *whom he loves better than his wife, let him divorce his *wife and marry her.' (*Jerom.*) This is a specimen of Rabbinical morality! (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 29, 30. This exact subjection of the sensual inclinations, this victory over the most potent desires of the heart, especially when habit and constitution have concurred to enslave men, must be attended with painful exertions, and the sacrifice of what hath been held very dear. But if it be as painful and as sensible a loss, as plucking out a right eye, or cutting off a right hand, it must be done. The flesh with the affections and lusts must be crucified, the strongest corruption conquered, and every appetite and inclination governed, in subjection to the authority of God, and in subserviency to his glory, the welfare of society, and the good of a man's own soul. If then the eye, or hand, or any other part of the body, could be so necessary an occasion of sin, that the temptation could by no other means be overcome, and that would certainly effect it, it would be a man's duty and wisdom to part with it; whatever anguish he endured, or how much soever the loss might be felt; as it would be advantageous for

him to lose one of his limbs, or organs of sense, rather than be cast with them all into hell. But though the members of the body are the instruments of sin, yet it proceeds from the lusts of the heart; if these be mortified, and every idolized object renounced, there will be no need to injure the body; and without this it would be of no use. This mortification of sinful passions may be excessively painful: but if men consent to lose their limbs, by excruciating operations, to save their lives, what ought they to shrink from, when it becomes requisite to the salvation of their souls? It must also be added, that the most watchful and self-denying government of every sense and appetite is implied in this admonition. It is worthy of observation, that Jesus always took it for granted that there is a future state, a resurrection of the body, and a hell, into which the wicked will be cast: and that he continually realized these things to men's minds, and called their attention to them. (*Marg. Ref.*) The word, rendered *offend*, literally signifies *cause to stumble*, in this and many other places in the New Testament. A stone is placed in the way, over which a man falls, and is lamed or killed; or a trap, in which he is taken: thus, whatever occasions sin is a stumbling stone, or a trap. 'The greatest part of Christ's auditors were poor people, who lived by their daily labour; and to these the loss of a right hand would be a much greater calamity than that of a right eye: so that there is a gradation and force in the passage, beyond what has generally been observed.' (*Doddridge.*)

V. 31, 32. (*Note, Deut. xxiv. 1-4.*) It hath been shown how the Jews mistook and perverted the *judicial* law, which permitted and regulated divorces, and was intended to render them less frequent and injurious; so that, when Christ appeared, they were exceedingly common, upon the most frivolous pretences. Having therefore mentioned the seventh commandment, he took the occasion to determine with authority this matter; and declared, that whosoever should put away his wife, except for fornication committed before marriage, (but concealed till afterwards,) or adultery after, (for the general word is supposed to imply both,) would expose her to a strong temptation to commit adultery by marrying another man, and he would be answerable for her sin; and the man, who should marry her that was put away, would commit adultery, her former husband being still living. It seems evident that divorces for adultery, (I apprehend on either side,) should be al-

33 ¶ Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

34 But I say unto you, "Swear not at all; neither by °heaven; for it is God's throne:

35 Nor by ^p the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is ^a the city of the great King:

36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy^r head; °because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

37 But 'let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these °cometh of evil.

38 ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, °An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

39 But I say unto you, °That ye resist

lowed to the injured party, if required, and without any tedious or expensive process. Some contend that the adulterous divorced person should not be allowed to marry again: this perhaps would be consistent with justice; yet it can scarcely be expected, that they who violate conjugal fidelity will be very scrupulous in a single state; and therefore more harm than good would result from the regulation, which is not found in Scripture. It may likewise be observed, that the allowance for divorcing the adulteress seems to imply, that the law for putting to death criminals of this class, was not to be considered as indispensable under the New Testament. (Notes, xix. 3—12.)

V. 33—37. The Scribes explained the third commandment, according to the tradition of the elders, as merely prohibiting gross perjury, especially the breach of promissory oaths, or vows to the Lord: and they allowed common swearing, except the names of God were expressly mentioned. (Note, Ex. xx. 7.) But Christ commanded his disciples not to swear at all. Examples in the New Testament prove, that swearing on solemn and important occasions is not unlawful, (2 Cor. i. 23. 1 Thes. ii. 5:) and there seems no reason to conclude, that oaths in a court of justice, or on any other occasion which fairly requires them, are wrong; provided they be taken with reverence of God's majesty, omniscience, and justice, and if they be exactly consistent with truth and equity. Yet the multiplication of oaths in our jurisprudence, and the irreverent manner in which they are administered, occasion immense guilt, and are an enormous evil. A pious man, however, though he disapproves of the manner in which oaths are administered, needs not disquiet himself when called on to take them, if he can otherwise do it with a clear conscience; for he is only answerable for his own conduct. But all oaths taken without necessity, on trivial occasions, or in common conversation, must be inconsistent with this prohibition; as well as all the expressions which are in common use, to answer the purpose, and, as it were, evade the guilt of swearing. The Jews, who scrupled to swear on such occasions by JEHOVAH, would swear by heaven, or by the earth, or by Jerusalem, or by their own heads. But all these implied an appeal to God, because of their relation to him; heaven is his throne, where he reveals his glory as the Ruler of the world, and the earth is, as it were, the footstool of that throne; Jerusalem was the holy city, where the temple, the earthly palace of the great King, was erected; even their heads were more the Lord's than their own; for whilst the continuance of life, understanding, and senses, depended wholly on him, they

could not change the colour of one single hair by their own exertion. The whole creation is the Lord's, and therefore to swear by any part of it implies an appeal to the great Creator and Judge. Thus, when men swear by their *lives*, their *souls*, their *faith*, or by *all that's good*, they virtually swear by the Lord, and appeal to him to confirm their testimony. Such expressions should not be used; much less should conversation be intermingled with the sacred names of God, Lord, or Christ, &c. as mere expletives, or notes of admiration; or with bad wishes: or even good wishes or prayers, 'as God bless us,' 'Lord have mercy 'on us,' and such like; when there is no seriousness or solemnity upon the mind, and they are words without meaning, but not without profaneness. It is remarkable, that even the writings of some of the most admired Pagan authors are interlarded with oaths, by Jupiter, by Hercules, &c.; and some professed Christians affect to use this Pagan language: but if an oath is a solemn act of worship, and if the devil was worshipped under these Pagan idols, then such expressions imply an act of worship to Satan, though they who use them may mean no such thing. It ought to suffice a Christian, seriously and constantly to affirm, or deny, and with repetition, if necessary; all that is more than this, in ordinary cases and conversation, cometh of evil, of *the evil one*, or of the evil of our corrupt nature: men are so deceitful, that they fear trusting each other without the security of oaths; they have suspicions of each other; or the speaker is of a suspicious character, and fears lest his bare word should not be taken; or he swears, to conceal his bad designs. But Christians should endeavour so to speak and act, that their word may be deemed as satisfactory as another man's oath. Indeed, though the whole necessity for oaths arises from the selfishness and deceitfulness of man, yet the worse men become, the less they are bound by them; and the better they are, the less need there is for them. 'This clause 'contains a demonstration, that the thirty-fourth verse is 'to be explained with the limitation proposed; for it is 'evident that oaths were, in some cases, not only *allowed*, 'but *required*, by the Mosaic law. (Ex. xxii. 11. Lev. v. 1. 'Num. v. 19—21. Deut. xxii. 12—14.) So that, if 'Christ's prohibition had here referred to swearing in solemn and judicial cases, he would in these words have 'charged the divine law with establishing an immorality.' (Doddridge.) The word, rendered *communication*, is *word*, or *discourse*, and limits the prohibition to conversation and social intercourse: so that to extend it to judicial and public transactions is not warranted by the passage itself,

z 1 Kings xxii. 24. not evil: but ² whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And ^a if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

41 And whosoever shall ^b compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

42 Give ^c to him that asketh thee; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.

43 ^d Ye have heard that it hath been said, ^e Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy:

44 But I say unto you, ^f Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

45 That ^g ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: ^h for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

46 For ⁱ if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the ^k publicans the same?

47 And if ye ^l salute your brethren only, ^m what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

48 Be ⁿ ye therefore perfect, ^o even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

V. 38—42. (Notes, Ex. xxi. 24, 25. Lev. xxiv. 19, 20.) The law referred to hath been shown to have been a judicial regulation, and the magistrate's rule in deciding causes, declaring the utmost punishment he might inflict, when nothing less would satisfy the offended party; yet the Scribes explained it, as if it had authorized private revenge, and even required people to demand or exact this severe retaliation. But Christ declared, that the *moral* law required the reverse of this vindictive spirit and conduct. His disciples were not allowed to resist evil, or the injurious party, either by violent opposition, or litigious law-suits. In the present state of human nature, there is little need to enumerate exceptions and limitations to such general rules: self-love will suffice. The preservation of life, or liberty, or important property, will authorize, and in many cases require, a man to stand in his own defence, at the peril of the illegal assailant; but in ordinary cases, it is better to give way, and yield to insults and injuries, than to repel them by force, or legal process; and it seems not to accord with the spirit of Christianity, to put the life and soul of a man in competition with a sum of money, when there is no reason to fear further violence. In smaller matters, however, the case is clear. If a man give a disciple of Christ a contemptuous or painful blow on the cheek, it is his duty and wisdom to imitate his Master, and take it patiently; nay, rather to turn the other, and expose himself to further insult, than to begin a contest, by returning the blow, sending a challenge, or commencing a law-suit; even though he should be ridiculed and despised for his want of spirit and courage, through his obedience to his Lord. If a man be sued at law, and injuriously deprived of his coat, or outer garment, which, though of small value, he could ill spare, yet he had better suffer himself to be defrauded of his cloak also, than be involved in the temptations and evils of seeking legal redress: (Note, 1 Cor. vi. 1—8.) Indeed, in cases of great importance, other duties may require him to avail himself of the protection of the law: justice to his creditors, and to the public, and even to his family, may engage him to defend his estate, and to give a check to the exorbitancy of unreasonable men; and a Christian may prosecute a criminal

out of love to public justice, though not from private revenge. Yet there will generally be men of the world enough to deal with such depredators; and a disciple of Christ will seldom have occasion to waste his time, or lose his temper, about them.—Under various pretences, also, unreasonable men may require Christ's disciples to attend them about business, public or private: but if they should insist upon a man's going a mile out of his way to serve them, it would be better to go two, than quarrel about it: and it would be expedient rather to give or lend, to those who injuriously required it, than to refuse with harshness or apparent selfishness; and much more to give, or lend, where there is need, and a prospect of doing good.—It is self-evident, that many and great limitations and exceptions must be admitted in the last instance; for no man could go on giving and lending to every one that should ask him; but he must consider his own ability, and the nature of the case, and act accordingly: and therefore we must suppose that limitations and exceptions are implied in the other admonitions, which must be judged of, according to the general law of loving our neighbour as ourselves. The grand and obvious instruction* is this, 'Suffer any injury for the sake of peace, when no duty requires the contrary, and commit your interests and concerns to the Lord's keeping.'—The case of those, who were compelled by authority to accompany and convey the baggage of travellers, who sustained a public character, is supposed to be meant in the forty-first verse. Even, if the case was oppressive, or the person compelled was legally exempted, compliance would be preferable to a contest.

V. 43—48. The Scribes explained the great law of loving their neighbours, with restriction to their own nation, sect, family, or friends; nay, they added, (in the form of a precept,) "and hate thine enemy:" and it is remarkable, that the best heathen moralists made large concessions in this matter to the malignity of the human heart. But the true spirit and intent of the law reaches to enemies and persecutors, on which the example of Christ forms the best comment. He therefore authoritatively commanded his disciples to love their enemies, to

CHAP. VI.

*Cautions and rules about almsgiving, 1—4 ;
and prayer, 5—8. The Lord's prayer,*

*9—13. They who seek forgiveness must
forgive, 14, 15. Cautions and rules
about fasting, 16—18. Treasure to be
laid up in heaven, 19, 20. The single*

regard them with compassion and benevolence ; to return good works and kind wishes to their revilings and imprecations, and beneficent actions to their injuries ; and to pray for their conversion and best good, even when oppressed, persecuted, and tortured by them. Thus they would evidence themselves to be the children of God, by bearing his image and copying his example ; for he sends the ordinary blessings of providence upon the evil, as well as on the good, though their crimes are direct enmity and rebellion against him. As, however, there are various favours, which he bestows only on his people ; so our peculiar friendship, kindness, and complacency, may, and ought to be, restricted to the righteous : yea, gratitude to benefactors, and predilection for special friends, consist very well with this general good-will and good conduct towards enemies and persecutors. Even publicans, and the most ungodly men, knew how to behave with civil respect and kindness to their friends and relations : but Christians, considering their superior knowledge, obligations, encouragements, assistances, and motives, must do "more than others : " else what has grace done for them ? What evidence have they of conversion ? What recompense can they expect from their Lord for that, of which wicked men are capable ? They cannot indeed attain to perfection, but it is their duty to aim at it : the *perfect* law is their rule and standard ; the *perfect* holiness and love of God their copy ; they should aim high, and seek to be "perfect, even as their Father which is in heaven is perfect." These concluding verses evidently prove, that our Lord's spiritual exposition of the law was intended, both to show the people their need of mercy and salvation, and also to teach his disciples the strict rule of duty : and all that in which they come short of it, or deviate from it, is sin, and needs deep repentance, continual forgiveness through his blood, and grace to enable them to more exact obedience. 'The publicans had the oversight of tributes and customs : a kind of men that the Jews hated to death ; both because they served the Romans in those offices, (whose yokeful bondage they could hardly away with all ;) and also because these tollmasters were for the most part given to covetousness,' (*Beza.*)—"These words, "Thou shalt hate thine enemy," are not found in the law of Moses ; though nothing is more common in the Jewish canons ;—which affords a strong argument, that Christ is not here correcting, or adding to, the precepts of the moral law ; but opposing the corrupt interpretations of the Scribes and Pharisees.—A neighbour is, every one with whom we have any dealing :—so the word must signify in the tenth commandment, if we do not leave the Israelite free to covet the wife of the Gentile.' (*Whitby.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—12.

The great end of preaching is, that men may hear, and

be made wise unto salvation ; when multitudes willingly attend, it is seasonable for the minister to preach, and time and place are not very material circumstances : a church or chapel is most convenient ; and the Lord's day the most favourable time : but a mountain or a field will be a holy place, or any day holy, if the Lord vouchsafe his presence and blessing.—The preaching of the Gospel was shown to be a most honourable employment, by our Lord's own condescending example ; and happy are they who enter upon it at his call, act in it from the same principles, and preach the same doctrines which he did. But it behoves us to speak with great seriousness, and a deep sense of the weight and difficulty of the work, and in a simple dependence on the Lord for assistance, acceptance, and a blessing.—The true Gospel is exceedingly *practical*, far more so than any other doctrine whatever : and numbers so mistake in this matter, that they would certainly condemn Christ himself as legal, if they could hear his sermons, without knowing who the preacher was.—True religion is so inseparably connected with happiness, that none can be happy without it, in this world and the next ; or fail of happiness, if they duly attend to it. But how different are the character and circumstances of the blessed of the Lord, from what the carnal mind would have imagined ! None, who have not faith and experience, will be persuaded, that the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, they who long earnestly for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peace-makers, and the persecuted, are the only happy persons in the world. Let us learn to consider this as a compendious description of a healthy constitution of mind, and a safe and happy condition in life ; and to consider the opposite dispositions and passions as distempers spoiling all true enjoyment, and by no means counterbalanced by the friendship of the world. Let us not suppose, that some men possess one, some another, of these holy dispositions ; but remember, that they all combine to form the image of Christ, and the temper of a true Christian ; and that where any one is absolutely wanting, all the rest are mere counterfeits. Let us also examine, whether we are brought to possess these Christian graces ; let us seek them, and the increase of them, from the Giver of every good gift ; let us take the annexed promises as encouragements to aspire after higher attainments, assured of proportionate happiness, as the subjects and heirs of the kingdom of heaven, and as the children of God, till we shall be admitted into his "presence, where is fulness of joy, and pleasures at his right hand, for evermore." Let us never envy the ambitious, the high-spirited, the gay, the injurious, or vindictive, the avaricious, the sensual, or the unmerciful ; the scourges of the earth, who take away peace from it, or any other of the sons of madness and mischief ; let us not covet their transient applause and prosperity in this evil world ; let us not be disquieted with the contempt, reviling, and persecution, we meet with, whilst we do all the good we can to all, and no evil to any. Happy will it be for us to suffer for Christ's

eye, 21—23. God and Mammon cannot both be served, 24. Solicitude about worldly things, being vain, needless, and

injurious, should be shunned; and the kingdom of God and his righteousness sought in the first place, 25—34.

sake, and in that cause for which he shed his precious blood; for great will be our reward in heaven. But let us be careful to give no just cause to the revilings of the ungodly, and to avoid all ostentation or bitterness under the cross: let us consider what prophets and apostles endured, and how they behaved under it: especially let us "look unto Jesus, lest we be weary and faint in our minds," and yield to impatience and recriminations under our lighter trials.

V. 13—16.

We should most carefully consider the importance of the Christian character, recollecting that we are "the salt of the earth, and the light of the world;" many eyes will be upon us; many will derive good or harm from their observations on our conduct. We should then endeavour to stem the torrent of impiety and wickedness, to diffuse the savour and light of divine truth, and to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, "letting our light shine before men," that our good works, as living sermons, may convince our fellow sinners of the excellency of religion, and so tend to the glory of God and the benefit of mankind. On this account, also, the Christian must by no means conceal his sentiments: for God does not enlighten the minds of his people, that they should put the light under a bushel, but that they should hold it forth for the benefit of others. We should therefore seek to shine, by professing and adorning the Gospel in our circle, whether large or small, that we may answer the end, for which God hath "called us out of darkness into his marvellous light."

V. 17—20.

Let no man perversely suppose that Christ allows his people to trifle with any command of God. Whilst he fulfilled the types and prophecies of the Old Testament; whilst he honoured the moral law and the exhortations of the prophets, by his obedience to death upon the cross; how impious must it be, to suppose that he did it to purchase men the license to indulge their lusts with impunity! No, till the consummation of all things, not one word shall pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. No sinner partakes of Christ's justifying righteousness, till he condemns himself as a transgressor of the law, and repents of his evil deeds: the goodness and mercy revealed in the Gospel, lead the believer to still deeper repentance and self-abhorrence: all unbelievers will be condemned for their transgressions of this law; it is the Christian's rule of duty, nay, it is written in his heart, and he delights in and longs to obey it. Let us then beware equally of antinomian licentiousness, and of pharisaical self-righteousness: these are Scylla and Charybdis, the fatal rock and whirlpool: most men, in shunning the one, fall into the other, and we need the Lord the Spirit to pilot us between them. But the clear and full exposition of the holy law of God, and the scriptural application to the heart and conscience, form one most important preservative from these fatal

extremes. They indeed, who inculcate more soothing principles, may be extolled by such as say, 'Speak smooth things;' but if at all within the kingdom, they are certainly the least of those that belong to it: while they, who enforce obedience by example and doctrine, shall be called great in the kingdom of God; nor will any man enter heaven, who has not in this world become more holy in heart and life, than scribes and pharisees ever were.

V. 21—32.

We ought also attentively to consider how important the Lord Jesus judged the right understanding of the moral law: and what fatal consequences followed from superficial, or erroneous, views of it. Whilst we therefore view the strictness, spirituality, and reasonableness of the precepts which we have been reading, as expounded by our divine Teacher, let us impartially compare our past and present lives, our tempers, affections, thoughts, words, and actions, with this perfect rule: then we shall find every self-confident hope expire, and plainly perceive, "that by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified in the sight of God:" then will Christ and his salvation become precious to our souls. Whether we look to our conduct towards those who have injured us, or those whom we have offended; towards our superiors or inferiors, relatives, friends, or servants; the state of our heart, or the government of our passions; to what we have, or what we have not, done; we shall see cause for humiliation and need of forgiveness: and when we consider that we must be made holy according to this standard, in order to the enjoyment of God and heaven, we shall as evidently perceive our need of the powerful influences of the Holy Spirit, and learn to value the ordinances of God, through which that sacred assistance is obtained. Thus it will also appear most evident, that strict justice to men, (as well as humiliation before God,) is indispensably necessary to our acceptably approaching a throne of grace, or the Lord's table: and we shall frequently be led to examine, whether any of our brethren have just cause of complaint against us, that we may remove every impediment to our comfortable communion with our heavenly Father.—And when we further weigh, with serious attention, the importance of eternity, and the shortness and uncertainty of our lives, we shall perceive the propriety and necessity of making our peace with God without delay, and shall learn to value and copy our blessed Peace-maker, who will shortly appear as the Judge and Avenger of all the impenitent workers of iniquity. Mature reflection on our situation in this world will reconcile us to that self-denying and painful mortification of our sins, to which we are indispensably called; we shall see tender mercy couched under the apparent harshness of the requirement; that our safety, advantage, and felicity, are consulted; and that the grace and consolations of the Spirit will render it practicable, and even comfortable. And, would we be preserved from gross iniquities, our hearts must be kept with

TAKE heed that ye do not your
 * alms before men, ^b to be seen of
 them; ^c otherwise ye have no reward ^d of
 your Father which is in heaven.

2 Therefore ^e when thou doest thine
 alms, ^f do not sound a trumpet before
 thee, ^g as the hypocrites do, ^h in the syna-

gogues and in the streets, that they
 may have ⁱ glory of men. ^j Verily I
 say unto you, They have their re-
 ward.

3 But when thou doest alms, ^k let not
 thy left hand know what thy right hand
 doeth:

4 That thine alms may be in se-
 cret: and thy father which ^l seeth
 in secret, himself shall ^m reward thee
 openly.

all diligence, and our eyes, and all our senses and faculties, forbidden to rove after those things which lead to transgression: the strictest rules of purity and self-denial will be found, by experience, the most conducive to true and solid comfort even while in this present world.

V. 33—42.

How excellent are all the commandments of God, yet how spiritual and extensive! Who can deny, that such an union of reverence towards the glorious God, and inviolable veracity and integrity towards men, as our Lord's prohibition of swearing, and his rule for our intercourse with each other, imply, is most reasonable and valuable? And all the commands, which require the exact government of the tongue, with meekness, patient endurance of injuries, love of enemies, yielding to the injurious, and doing good to our persecutors, though contrary to corrupt nature and the maxims of an evil world, have an evident excellency in them, and are calculated to form a character of real dignity, and bearing a great resemblance to the divine purity, patience, beneficence, and mercy: and doubtless they, who act according to these rules, will both have most peace and comfort themselves, and be the greatest blessings to their families, neighbours, and the community. Were they universally obeyed, the greatest part of the evils in the world would be annihilated: wars, massacres, law-suits, domestic discords, frauds, rapines, oppressions, would cease: unavoidable evils would be mitigated, and rendered more supportable: equity, truth, purity, peace and love, would, as it were, descend from heaven, to dwell on earth, and drive their hateful opposites down to hell, from whence they came. Thus it would be, if all men were Christians, and well understood and practised their holy religion.

V. 43—48.

Our motives, encouragements, and manifold advantages, suffice for considerable attainments in all things. More may be expected from those, who are redeemed to God by the blood of Christ, than from other men; more will be found in them, notwithstanding inward and outward impediments; and whenever they suffer themselves to be out-done, or even equalled, in what is good and commendable, by such as are strangers or enemies to the Gospel, they forget their principles and degrade their character. Let us all then beg of God to enable us to prove ourselves his children, by copying his example of goodness and mercy even to the vile and injurious; not "being over-

gogues and in the streets, that they
 may have ⁱ glory of men. ^j Verily I
 say unto you, They have their re-
 ward.

3 But when thou doest alms, ^k let not
 thy left hand know what thy right hand
 doeth:

4 That thine alms may be in se-
 cret: and thy father which ^l seeth
 in secret, himself shall ^m reward thee
 openly.

"come of evil, but overcoming evil with good." Let us learn to reverence an oath, as well as to pay the Lord our vows: let us aim to establish such a reputation for truth and integrity, that we may be readily believed, when our communication is yea, yea; nay, nay; and that we may not be tempted to any of that language which cometh of evil. In short, let us be "followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love, even as Christ loved us, and gave himself "a sacrifice" for our sins: and, following after higher degrees of holiness, let us expect, as our gracious and glorious reward, to be at length made "perfect, even as "our Father which is in heaven is perfect."

NOTES.

CHAP. VI. V. 1—4 The Pharisee's religion was distinguished from that of Christ, by its *motives*, as much as by its *rule*. Our Lord therefore next proceeded to warn his disciples against hypocrisy and ostentation in external duties. He began, by admonishing them not to perform "their righteousness," or *good works*, "to be seen of men." Thus some ancient copies and approved versions read it as a general word, including the several particulars that follow. (*Marg.*) Christians should "let their light so shine before men, that others may see their good works, "and glorify their Father;" yet they ought not to do their works "to be seen of men." Their general conduct should be so exemplary, as to constrain men to see an excellency in their religion: but every action should spring from humility, the fear and love of God, and regard to his acceptance and glory; and not from a desire of being noticed and commended. (*Note, v. 14—16. xxiii. 5.*) This our Lord illustrated, by mentioning some of those religious services, in which hypocrites are most tempted to ostentation and vain glory, and in which Christians should most consult secrecy, as far as consistent with other duties. He therefore instructed his disciples, when they gave alms, or contributed to charitable or pious purposes, to shun notoriety as much as possible: for the hypocrites of that time bestowed as much pains to publish their liberality in the synagogues, public assemblies, and even streets, as if they had caused it to be made known by sound of trumpet; for they sought, as their primary object, the applause of men, and to be accounted excellent persons. Not but that they made a merit before God of their services, and expected to compensate for their sins, and purchase heaven with them; but had not the praise of men been principally aimed at, they would not have been so earnest in proclaiming their liberality or charity; and therefore this praise would be their sole reward. But the

vii. 7. c. in 28.
xvi. 22. Ps. v. 9.
17. Prov. xix.
18. 1v. c. 7.
Jer. xxix. 12.
Dan. vi. 10. ix.
4. Mc. Luke
xxviii. 1. John
xvi. 23. Eph. vi.
18. Col. iv. 2, 3.
1. Thes. v. 17.
Jam. v. 15. 16.
o. 2. xxviii. 13. Job
xxviii. 10. 12.
1. 15. Luke xviii.
10. 11. xx. 47.
p. xxviii. 6. Mark
xii. 38. Luke xi.
43. ——— q. 2. Luke xiv. 12-14. — r. xiv. 23. xxvi. 36-39. Gen. xxxii. 24-29. 2 Kings
1v. 33. Is. xxvi. 20. John i. 49. Acts ix. 10. x. 9. 30.

5 ¶ And "when thou prayest, " thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: " for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. " Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.

6 But thou, "when thou prayest, " enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut

thy door, "pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

7 But when ye pray, "use not vain repetitions, as " the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them; for " your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

disciple of Jesus must "not let his left hand know what " his right hand doeth:" he should act as secretly as the case will admit, and not think much of it himself, or indulge self-complacency; he must not desire that his charity should be known, or spoken of; but rather that it should be concealed, that he may be satisfied with having acted out of regard to the will and favour of his heavenly Father, who seeth in secret, and not from desire of worldly applause: and in this case, his Father seeing both the action and motive to be good, will graciously accept, and publicly recompense them, especially at the day of judgment. Circumstances vary and require variations in our outward conduct; there are many charities, which can scarcely be promoted without some degree of public notoriety; and frequently a leading person may be called to excite those that are backward, by an useful example. Yet no part of duty is more liable to be made an occasion for vain glory than this: and many designs, very useful to others, are supported by a liberality, which almost entirely springs from this corrupt principle. The heart is deceitful: and when men love to have their names inserted among the subscribers to public charities, but are not equally liberal in private; when they love to speak and hear of their own beneficence, and are not willing to do much without the credit of it; it is too plain how the case stands with them. In general, private charities, if not more useful, are more unequivocal; and the less reward we receive from man, the more we may expect from our gracious God, provided we act from evangelical principles. Our Lord here takes it for granted, that his disciples will give alms, more or less, according to their ability; and that every good work done from proper motives will be rewarded by our God and Father. The word *hypocrite* is supposed to be derived from acting on a stage a *personated* part, from desire of honour and profit; and it is probable, that the spectators of such exhibitions were frequently collected by sound of trumpet.

V. 5. The hypocrites in our Lord's days were very ostentatious in their devotions. Not contented with frequenting the synagogues, to join in public worship, they resorted thither to offer those prayers which ought to have been made in secret: and there they stood and prayed in the view and hearing of all the people: nay, they stopped in the corners of the streets, or where two ways met, to perform their devotions, pretending perhaps that it was the stated time, and they must not on any account omit the duty. But they contrived this on purpose "to be seen " of men," that all might know how devout they were, and applaud and confide in them accordingly. Indeed, they

acquired this reputation; but they must expect no other reward. Christ alone used this word "Verily," (or "Amen," as in the original,) in this manner: He is the "Amen, the faithful and true Witness." He always used it to confirm matters of great importance, which men are very backward to believe; it is an exceedingly strong affirmation, especially when doubled, and perhaps not very different from the expression in the Old Testament, "As " I live, saith the Lord." (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 6. The Christian, when he prayeth alone, (for private is to be distinguished from public and social worship,) must be as retired as possible: he must go into his closet, or chamber, or any secret place, and shut the door, that he may not be overheard or disturbed; and there pour out his heart before God, as into the bosom of his loving Father, only desiring to be noticed and accepted of him, who seeth the secret recesses of the heart, as well as the most retired corner of the house. Such prayer God will accept, answer, and reward: yea, it shall be openly declared before men and angels, as an evidence of a man's humility, faith, and unfeigned piety, and graciously recompensed accordingly. Here also circumstances may demand a different conduct: Daniel saw it right to be very open in his devotions, as not afraid or ashamed, in most perilous times, of being known to pray to his God: and in some cases this may expose a man to contempt and the cross, which it may be his duty to bear for the Lord's sake. They, who are constant in private devotions, cannot entirely conceal it from their families, and generally should not studiously desire to do it. A field, a garden, or a mountain, may be as retired as a closet; they are consecrated by Christ's own conduct, and wherever the heart can be lifted up to God, without men's observing it, the Christian may properly offer his prayers.

V. 7, 8. It is evident that this rule is not transgressed by using repetitions from the fullness of the heart, when, earnestly craving some special mercy, men know not how to give over, or proceed to another subject, till they have some good hope that it will be granted. These are not vain repetitions, but like those which Christ himself made in the garden; and both he and his most eminent servants have undoubtedly used many repetitions. (*Marg. Ref.*) But such repetitions are meant as Baal's priests used during several hours, for which Elijah even derided them. (1 Kings xviii. 26-29.) These were common among the Pagans, as learned men have abundantly shown; and the church of Rome has imitated them in their numerous Pater-nosters and Ave-Marias, which the people are taught

John xx. 17.
Rom. viii. 19.
Eph. iii. 14.

1 Kings xviii. 26.
— 27. Ec. v. 2.
3. 7. Acts xix.
31.
— xxvi. 33. 42. 44.
1 Kings viii. 29.
— 34. Dan. 12.
16. 19.
x. 32. xviii. 17.

2. 32. Ps. xxxviii.
9. Isai. 17-19.
— 24. Luke xii. 30.
Phil. iv. 6.

z Luke x. 1, 2.

a. 1. c. 14, 15.

v. 16, 15, 48.

v. 11, 8, 22.

xxv. 29, 9, 42, 15, 18, 16, 18, 15.

Gal. i. 1, 19, 6, 1 Pet. i. 17.

b. xxv. 9, 2 Chr. xx. 6, Ps. cxv. 3, Is. i. 15, 18, 19, 1.

9 After * this manner, therefore, pray

ve: * Our Father * which art in

to use, without either meaning or devotion; and which they number, in performing their penance, or task, by counting strings of beads. But many others are, in a measure, faulty in the same way, in private and social worship; both of those who use forms, and those who pray extempore. It is not uncommon for men to employ most words, when they have the least meaning; and to spend the time in vain repetitions, even when the affections, and perhaps the very thoughts, are otherwise employed. This is an imitation of the heathen, who thought to excite their deities to attend and help them, by the multiplicity of their words, and as if the multitude of their words had been meritorious. But Christians should have more honourable thoughts of their omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, and merciful Father, who knoweth what they need and desire before they begin to ask him, and is disposed of himself to give them all they want. He only requires his children to pray, that they may more sensibly feel and acknowledge their indigence and dependence; that their desires and expectations may be excited; and that they may thus be brought into a proper frame of mind to receive the blessing, and render him the praise. But all copiousness in prayer must no more be condemned, than all repetitions; for Christ continued whole nights in prayer: and there are so many things to be asked for ourselves and others, that if our hearts be in a spiritual frame, we may pray for a long time together, without formality, or unmeaning repetitions. Yet where these begin, devotion ends. 'Cicero denies God's omniscience, declaring that he did not think that God himself could know things casual and fortuitous. The heathen thought it not fit to allow of a God so curious as to attend all things, or take care of all things, or to think all things belonged to him: and they thought it as well impossible, as unsufferable, in the God of the Christians, that he should diligently inspect the manners, actions, words, and secret thoughts of all men, and be every where present with them.' (*Whitby*.) This observation illustrates the propriety and energy of the instructions given in these verses. If philosophical heathens entertained such mean thoughts of the supreme Being, what must the delusion and superstition of the ignorant multitude have been, when they exclaimed, vociferously and incessantly, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians?" or "O Baal, hear us?"

V. 9. We now enter on the consideration of that prayer, which Christ repeatedly taught his disciples; and which perhaps contains more important instruction, than can any where else be found in so few words. Some expositors indeed argue, that it was only intended for the use of the disciples, before the introduction of the Christian dispensation. But neither Matthew nor Luke, who recorded it after that dispensation was more fully opened, give any such intimation. We are not indeed directed in this prayer, to present all our petitions in the name of Christ, and through his merits and intercession; for it was not proper explicitly to declare this at that time. No doubt the form has been greatly misused by unmeaning repetitions, to the exclusion of real prayer; and it is often

heaven, * Hallowed be thy name. c. 15, 5, 16, 20, 26, 1, 10, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

repeated even by Protestants with very little understanding, and not without some degree of superstition. But perceiving these mistakes, some pious persons seem to have run into the opposite extreme, and to have improperly objected to the use of it, and even in a measure to have overlooked the abundant instruction contained in it. On this occasion our Lord introduced the prayer by saying, "In this manner pray ye:" in St. Luke's Gospel we read, "When ye pray, say." It may often be proper to use the very words, but it is not always necessary; for we do not find that the apostles thus used it: but we ought always to pray, after the manner of it; that is, with that reverence, humility, seriousness, confidence in God, zeal for his glory, love to mankind, submission and moderation in temporal, and earnestness about spiritual, things, which it inculcates; avoiding vain repetitions, and using grave and comprehensive expressions. Nor can we offer one petition warranted by the word of God, but it is virtually comprised in these few sentences. Christ instructed his disciples especially, (though in the hearing of the multitude;) and he had before frequently spoken to them of God, as *their* Father in heaven, whom they were to glorify, from whom they were to expect their reward, and who knew what things they had need of. Under this endearing character he here teaches us to address him in prayer. He is the Father of all living creatures, being the Author and Preserver of their existence; of all rational creatures, as the Father of spirits; and especially of men, whom he continues to provide for, and do good to, notwithstanding their transgressions. But though he hath always been as a Father to us, we have rebelled against him; and by joining, and becoming like, the arch-apostate, we are in state and character the children of the wicked one. Yet under a dispensation of mercy, through the divine Mediator, our God is still revealed to us as a Father, who is ready to receive and be reconciled to his rebellious offspring, whenever they are willing to return to his worship and service. As soon as the sinner "comes to himself," and purposes to return to God by faith and prayer, he is taught to approach him as a kind Father, and not as an inexorable Judge and Avenger; that he may come before him with encouragement. Thus this endearing appellation teaches the mourning penitent to pray with hope, and the established believer with filial confidence, as well as to regard the glory of his Father, and to seek for all the dispositions of dutiful children. The expression "which art in heaven," reminds us of the sovereign and universal authority, power, and majesty of God, and of his justice, holiness, greatness, and felicity: for, heaven is the high, holy, and happy place, the throne of God, and the region of pure delight. This then instructs us to come before God, with deep humility, and adoring reverence of his majesty and condescension; with abstraction of mind from external objects and carnal imaginations; with spiritual desires and large expectations, and aspiring to the purity and felicity of his heavenly worshippers. The first petition is, "Hallowed be thy name," or, Let thy name be sanctified, and had in honour. The name of God sig-

d iii 2 iv 17
xii 28 ps ii 6

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will

be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Jer xxiii 5, 6 Dan ii 44 vs 13, 14, 27 Zech. ix. 9 Mark xii 10 Luke xix 11 John i 13 Rev xi 15, xii 10 xix. 6 xx. 4—cxi 21 xi 50 xxxi 42 Ps xl 8 Matt ii 38 John iv 34 v 38, 40 vi 17 Acts xiii 22 xxv. 1 Rom xii 2 Eph. vi 6 Col i 9 1 Thes. x 3 v 18. Heb. x 7, 36 xii 21 1 Pet ii 15 v 2

be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Neh ix 6 ps. ciii 19—21.

11 Give us this day our daily bread. Dan iv 29. Hei i 14 Ps. xlv 4 Ex xxi 16—5 Job xlii 12 ps xxxiii 18, 19 xxxiv 10 Prov xxx 9 Luke x1 3 John vi 31, &c 2 Thes iii 12 1 Tim vi 8

nifies his being and perfections, as well as the appellations by which he is known among men. We are taught to pray in the *first place*, that this name of God may be known, adored, and glorified. We desire in this petition for ourselves, that happiness which is to be enjoyed in the knowledge, service, and favour of God; that we may so behold his glory as to love, adore, and honour him; and that he may be glorified in and by us for ever. We also pray, that the Lord would in the same manner make himself known to others around us, till all nations know and worship him in spirit and in truth, as the God of salvation, and as revealed to us in his word.—So that this is a prayer, that all atheism, infidelity, idolatry, impiety, superstition, ignorance, and false religion, may be banished from the earth; that God would make himself known in his mysterious nature, and incomprehensible glory and grace, to all nations; that He, and He alone, as one God in three persons, may be worshipped and honoured, spiritually and acceptably, all over the whole earth, and by every one of the human species. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 10. The next petition hath given rise to the opinion, that this prayer was only suited to the first opening of the Christian dispensation, which is frequently called “the kingdom of God” and “of heaven.” But so long as any part of the earth remains under the power of sin and Satan, this petition must be proper; nay, till the whole kingdom of grace shall be swallowed up in the kingdom of glory. In order that God’s name may be hallowed, the kingdom of the Messiah must come, and be established on earth in its energy and efficacy. This petition therefore implies, first, an earnest desire that this kingdom of God may be set up in our hearts, reducing all within us to entire subjection to Christ our King: then, that it may be set up in the hearts of our children, relatives, servants, friends, neighbours; that all, who call themselves Christians, may be led into the way of truth and holiness: that the true Gospel may be every where preached, with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven to render it efficacious; and that “all kings may fall down before the Redeemer, that all nations may do him service:” and, in short, that in due time, sin, and Satan and all his party, may be banished out of the world, and shut up in hell, never more to defile or disturb the creation or kingdom of God. Every thing relative to the sending forth, qualifying, and success of ministers, the conversion of sinners, the peace and purity of the Church, the subversion of anti-christian powers, and the bringing of Jews, Pagans, and Mahometans into the Church, is implied in this petition.—“We therefore, in this petition,—pray, that all men may become subjects to the kingdom of God erected by Christ; that the knowledge of the Christian faith may come to all nations; that “the kingdoms of the world” may be the kingdoms of our Lord Christ;”—all kings and nations, people and languages, doing him service;—that his kingdom may be advanced by the coming in of the Jews, and by the fulness of the Gentiles; that the Christian religion may obtain every where, as well in reality as

“profession; the minds of all men being subdued to the obedience of faith, and they showing forth the virtues of ‘it in their lives.’” (*Whitby.*)—To this is annexed, “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” The will of God may be considered either with respect to his commandments or his providence: strictly speaking, his providential will is done in earth equally as in heaven; but that submission, acquiescence, and satisfaction in it, which angels feel and express, may be intended. Yet the use commonly made of this clause, as if it exclusively meant resignation to the will of God, greatly limits and enervates its weighty and extensive import.—All the inhabitants of heaven do the will of God, universally, cheerfully, constantly, perfectly, harmoniously, without weariness, and with ineffable delight: and we are taught to pray, that all the inhabitants of the earth may imitate and emulate their example; that all men, becoming the disciples and subjects of Christ, may renounce all sin and wickedness, and obey God’s commandments, with constancy, harmony, and alacrity, as angels in heaven do; that an end may be put to all injustice, oppression, fraud, violence, bloodshed, intemperance, licentiousness, ungodliness, selfishness, malice, and contention; and that righteousness, truth, goodness, mercy, purity, love of God and of each other, may fill the earth, even as they fill heaven. And what a change would this be! What an extensive petition is this!—At the same time we are taught to pray, that all men may rejoice in the sovereignty, authority, and glory of God, and be contented and satisfied with his appointments respecting them, without envy or ambition; but rejoicing to see others honoured, prospered, and happy, even as the inhabitants of heaven do. And whilst we ask such and so many blessings for others, we are taught to ask for this obedient, submissive frame of mind for ourselves, and to seek for it and aim at it, in our whole conduct.

V. 11. Having in the *first place* sought those things, which pertain to “the kingdom of God and his righteousness,” and prayed for the display of his glory, and the best good of men, all over the earth; we are next directed to ask of God those things that pertain to our bodies and this present life. Many indeed explain this petition, as if spiritual blessings, even “the Bread of life, which “came down from heaven to give life unto the world,” was meant; and some even explain it of the sacramental bread in the Lord’s supper. But the supply of our temporal wants seems immediately intended. Bread is one principal part of the things which are needful for the body, and is often put for the whole: by the use of this word, we are taught to ask only things that are necessary, without craving superfluities; and to refer it to our heavenly Father to determine what things are necessary, according to our station in life, our families, and various other circumstances. All Christians, whether rich or poor, are instructed to ask this provision from God: for all depend upon him for it, should receive it as his gift, give him thanks for it, and use it to his glory; whether it come

b. Ex. xxxiv. 7.
 Jer. xvi. 30.
 Ps. xlii. 12.
 Prov. xxi. 10.
 Dan. ix. 19.
 Acts xiii. 39.
 Eph. i. 7.
 John i. 7-9.
 Ixxvii. 23-27.
 Luke vi. 40-42.
 xi. 4.
 14. 15. xlvii. 22.
 22. 23. 35. Neh. v. 12.
 13. Mark xi. 25.
 26. Luke vi. 37.
 xvii. 3-5.
 Eph. iv. 32.
 Col. iii. 13.
 Ixxxi. 41.
 Gen. xxxii. 1.
 Deut. viii. 2.
 16. Prov. xxx. 8.
 9. Luke xxi. 31.
 32. 40. 46. 1 Cor. x. 13.
 2 Cor. 12. 7-9.
 Heb. 11. 36.
 37. 1 Pet. v. 2.
 2 Pet. ii. 9.
 Rev. ii. 10. iii. 10.

12 And ^b forgive us our ^c debts, ^k as we forgive our debtors.

13 And ^l lead us not into temptation,

but ^m deliver us from evil: For ⁿ thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. ^o Amen.

m. Chr. iv. 10.
 Jer. xvi. 30.
 Ps. xlii. 12.
 Prov. xxi. 10.
 Dan. ix. 19.
 Acts xiii. 39.
 Eph. i. 7.
 John i. 7-9.
 Ixxvii. 23-27.
 Luke vi. 40-42.
 xi. 4.
 14. 15. xlvii. 22.
 22. 23. 35. Neh. v. 12.
 13. Mark xi. 25.
 26. Luke vi. 37.
 xvii. 3-5.
 Eph. iv. 32.
 Col. iii. 13.
 Ixxxi. 41.
 Gen. xxxii. 1.
 Deut. viii. 2.
 16. Prov. xxx. 8.
 9. Luke xxi. 31.
 32. 40. 46. 1 Cor. x. 13.
 2 Cor. 12. 7-9.
 Heb. 11. 36.
 37. 1 Pet. v. 2.
 2 Pet. ii. 9.
 Rev. ii. 10. iii. 10.

from their estates, commerce, husbandry, professions, labour, or skill, or from the liberality of other men. We are taught to ask it for the day, (perhaps with reference to the manna, which Israel received fresh every day:) and this instructs us to beware of covetousness, to be moderate, and contented with a slender provision, and to trust God from day to day. We ask it as "our bread," which may intimate, that we must expect it in the way of honesty and industry: for all that is gotten by fraud, or any kind of sin, is the wages of unrighteousness, and the maintenance given, (so to speak,) by Satan to his servants. Whilst we seek our daily bread from God, we must diligently use all lawful means of obtaining it, and be provident, industrious, and frugal; but we must reject with abhorrence all that might be gotten by means inconsistent with piety, equity, truth, and charity; and never expect to be supported in sloth or extravagance. (*Note, Prov. xxx. 7-9.*) Learned men differ about the derivation and proper rendering of the word translated *daily*: but our version seems to give the true meaning of it. "Lord, give us, day by day, that which shall be sufficient for the remainder of our lives." (*Whitby.*) This accords with the clause, as found in the Gospel by St. Luke, "Give us, day by day, our daily bread."

V. 12. Whilst we are seeking from our heavenly Father so many and great blessings, we must not forget, that we have forfeited our claim to them by our sins, and are deserving of his heavy indignation. But "there is forgiveness with him:" and therefore we are taught to pray for forgiveness as often as for daily bread; and not only of our former sins, but of our renewed offences in thought, word, and deed; in heart and life; of omission and commission; in our conduct towards God and man. By these we run *in debt* continually: we receive our being and all our powers and possessions from God, to whom they all ought to be devoted in perfect love; by our failure in this we contract a debt which we cannot pay, but which needs continual remission. By being taught to ask forgiveness every time we pray, we are reminded to exercise constant watchfulness, self-examination, humiliation, faith and hope in God's mercy through Christ, patience, and forgiveness of others: for we are taught to add, "as we forgive our debtors." We ought to forgive others; as we expect forgiveness from God: their failure of their duty to us is a small debt, contracted like our great one in failing of our duty to God. (*Marg. Ref.*) True repentance and faith always produce a disposition to forgive others: habitual malice and revenge are proofs of impenitence: if a believer be betrayed into so unchristian a spirit, he must not expect the comfort of forgiveness, or communion with God; but frowns, fears, rebukes, and corrections, till reduced to a better temper. We are therefore by this reminded frequently to examine ourselves in this respect, lest, in praying for the pardon of our sins, we should in fact call for wrath instead of mercy to our

souls: at the same time we are reminded to pray for the humble, gentle, forgiving spirit, thus emphatically required of us.—The use of the word *debts*, is not to be understood of pecuniary debts, which the debtor is able to pay, and the creditor cannot well afford to lose: yet where our debtors stand in the same predicament respecting us, as we do in respect of God; that is, when they have it not in their power to pay us, and would be ruined, or greatly distressed, if we rigorously insisted on it; then we must remit the debt, as we hope for God to remit ours.—This petition supposeth that we are sinners, and want God's mercy in the pardon of our offences against him: that these our sins, should God deal with us according to the merit of them, would render us obnoxious to his just displeasure: for, seeing every sin is a transgression of God's holy law, it must render us guilty, till by an act of grace we have obtained the remission of it:—and, being the first spiritual petition we make for ourselves, it shows how much we are concerned to obtain it; our happiness depending wholly on the favour of God, and our misery on his displeasure. (*Whitby.*)—It is hardly possible to imagine a more effectual expedient to promote the forgiveness of injuries, than this of making it a part of our daily prayers to ask such pardon from God, as we impart to our offending brother. (*Doddridge.*)

V. 13. We are next instructed to pray that the Lord would "not lead us into temptation." (*Note, Gen. xxii. 1.*) He never puts evil into our hearts, or stirs it up there by any positive influence: in the former respect, "a man is tempted by his own lust; and enticed," in the latter, by Satan or wicked men. But the providence of God leads us into such circumstances, as have a tendency to give our inward corruptions, and the temptations of Satan and his agents, advantage against us. This he does, to prove the reality or power of our grace, the sincerity or hypocrisy of our profession, or the remaining prevalence of sin. But, as conscious of our own weakness and depravity, fearing to offend God, dishonour the Gospel, grieve our brethren, stumble others, or wound our own consciences, we ought to pray "not to be led into temptation;" to beseech God to mortify our sinful propensities, to restrain the malice and power of the tempter, to keep us out of difficult and trying circumstances, to proportion our strength to our day, and never to permit us to be tempted above what we are able. Thus we are instructed to hate and dread sin, whilst we hope for mercy; to distrust ourselves; to rely on the providence, as well as grace, of God, to keep us from it; to shun temptation as much as we can; to watch over our own hearts; to be habitually prepared to repel the assaults of the tempter, and to take care not to become tempters to others. Great damage often comes to us, by overlooking this needful request.—The concluding petition is, "but deliver us from evil." Some expositors render it "from the evil

12. vii. 2 xviii.
13. 25. Prov.
xvi. 13. Mark
xi. 25. 26. Dan.
xi. 13. 1 John
iii. 10.

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

13. ix. 14, 15. 2
Sam. xii. 16
21. New. 1. 4
Ezra iv. 16. Ps.
xcv. 13. ix. 13
10. cix. 24. Dan.
ix. 3. Luke ii.
37. Acts x. 30.

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

xiii. 2. 3. Rsv.
1 Cor. vii.
2 Cor. vi. 5. xi. 27
14. Mark ii. 18. Luke xviii. 12.

16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance:

"one;" but why should we confine the interpretation? We are taught to pray for deliverance from all kinds, degrees, and occasions of evil; from the malice, power, and subtlety of the powers of darkness; from this evil world, and all its allurements, snares, tempters, and deceivers; from the evil of our own hearts, that it may be restrained, subdued, and finally extirpated; from the evil of suffering, from the final wrath of God, from terrible or injurious temporal calamities, from the terror and sting of death, from the power of death by a glorious resurrection; from all evil, natural and moral; from sin and all its consequences; by the complete restoration of both body and soul to holiness and happiness, glory and immortality, in the enjoyment of the divine favour, and in the beatific vision for evermore. It is a prayer, that whatever temptation, persecution, or affliction, may overtake us, we may be preserved through all; and finally obtain eternal life and felicity, by the mercy and grace of God in Jesus Christ.—To this is added a concluding doxology, "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." That kingdom, for the coming of which we pray, is the Lord's; all power and authority are his, and he is able to set it up in our hearts and in the world, in defiance of all opposition, and his will be the glory to all eternity; so that this may be considered as a reason why our prayers should be answered, and an encouragement that they will. Or it may be understood as an expression of our cordial joy and satisfaction in the kingdom, power, and glory, being the Lord's for ever, as becomes the children of our Father in heaven; and our desire and purpose to give him all honour, worship, love, praise, thanksgiving, and obedience, for evermore; and our ardent wish that all others might do the same. To all this we are taught to set our confirming and entire assent and consent, by the word "Amen." So be it: Let all this be so established and completed to the glory of God, and we desire no more." (Marg. Ref.) What now is there in this prayer, that is not purely evangelical, and suited to the case and wants of every Christian, and every congregation? What can be more spiritual, comprehensive, or energetic? What is wanting? Or what redundant? What more fraught with glowing zeal for the honour of God, expansive love to mankind, and fervent thirsting after all the blessings of salvation? What can be more replete with important instruction? It only wants to be better understood, and used with correspondent affections, to constitute such devotion as would almost emulate the worship of heaven. This clause, (the concluding doxology,) is not in St. Luke, nor in many copies of St. Matthew: yet there are sufficient reasons for receiving it as a part of

for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward.

17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face:

18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is

1. Ruth iii. 3.
2 Sam. xiv. 2.
Ec. ix. 8. Dan.
x. 2. 3.
18. Col. iii. 22.
—24. 1 Pet. ii.
13.

the Lord's prayer; as being in the Syriac version, in the Greek liturgies, and in the most ancient copies: and because it is very unlikely that the holy fathers of the Greek church should presume to add their own inventions to a form of our Lord's own composing. But it is probable that our Lord, delivering this form twice, upon different occasions, might add this clause at the first time, and leave it out at the second; and that the Latin copies, which are full of errors, might leave it out in both, lest the evangelists should seem to differ in a matter so considerable." (Whitby.)

V. 14, 15. Our Lord, by this declaration, calls our attention most powerfully to the clause in the twelfth verse, "as we forgive our debtors;" and, by substituting the word *trespasses* for *debts*, still further illustrates his meaning. We must not suppose that forgiveness of those who injure us can in any degree merit the forgiveness of God; or that he will pardon the impenitent and unbelieving, because, out of a natural facility of temper, they forgive others, without any due regard to his authority and glory. The persons addressed are professed disciples: when their hearts do not in this respect condemn them, they have confidence towards God, though conscious of much unworthiness; but if their hearts condemn them, their confidence will be abated: (Note, 1 John iii. 18—23:) and if they utterly fail in this, their hypocrisy is manifested. (Notes, xviii. 21—35.) To this true remission it is requisite, that our minds be wholly freed from all desires of revenge, or of returning evil for evil: that we do not rejoice in any evil that befalls our brother. (Prov. xxiv. 17:) that we do not so retain the evil done to us in our memory, as to upbraid him with it; and that we be still inclined to show kindness to him, and be still ready to help and do him good. So far we must go in our forgiveness of all persons, at all times, even though they do not ask forgiveness. When this is done sincerely we must admit our offending brother into friendship and familiarity, our heart must be toward him as formerly it was. This forgiveness must be without delay, seeing we pray for present forgiveness; and if we do not thus forgive, we cannot say "Forgive, as we forgive." It must be entire, even of the most heinous crimes: otherwise we pray that our greatest crimes may not be forgiven. And it must be extended to our brother, though he doth frequently offend, (Luke xvii. 3:) for we pray daily to God for the forgiveness of our daily sins." (Whitby.) The term brother is frequently used on this subject; but it is evident, that we are not only required thus to forgive our brethren in Christ, but also our bitterest persecutors, for Christ's sake.

in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in

secret, shall reward thee openly.
 19 ¶ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

V. 16—18. Our blessed Lord, having given these copious instructions concerning prayer, proceeds to caution his disciples against ostentation in another religious duty. The Pharisees fasted often, but in a hypocritical and self-righteous manner: even in their private fasts, they used to appear abroad with gloomy countenances, and with such sordid and slovenly neglect of their persons, as gave every body to understand how they were employed. They assumed this appearance, to keep up their credit and to gain applause for their extraordinary sanctity: and this would be their reward; for God would not accept such vain-glorious services. But Christ's disciple, (who is supposed on some occasions to fast, as well as to give alms and pray,) was to avoid all ostentation, when thus humbling himself before God; and in his family, or when called from home, to be as cheerful, and decent in his attire, as at other times; that he might not appear to men to fast, but be satisfied with the notice and acceptance of God his Father, who is in the secret chambers of his worshippers, as well as in their public assemblies; and who will graciously and openly reward such unfeigned expressions of humiliation for sin, mortification of the flesh, desires after holiness, and abstraction from worldly pleasures, for the sake of communion with him. (*Marg. Ref.*) 'The word, rendered "a sad countenance," is properly the "look of a wild beast; a lion, or a bear robbed of her whelps, grim and ghastly." (*Leigh.*) That rendered "disfigured," seems to imply the neglect of usual attentions to the hair, &c. and the covering of the face, as mourners used to do. (2 Sam. xix. 4. 24.) Thus the face, or usual form of it, *disappeared*.

V. 19—21. The Pharisees aimed to be seen of men, not only to obtain applause and reputation, but to gratify their covetousness: and therefore our Lord next warned his disciples against this destructive evil. As a Christian is a pilgrim on earth and a citizen of heaven, he here only wants subsistence, or so to speak, travelling expenses, but he needs a treasure in heaven. He ought not therefore to lay up *for himself* a treasure on earth; for that must shortly be left to others; and all things here below, however idolized or valued, are liable to decay and waste. Moths eat and spoil the garments of those who have rich wardrobes; nay, even metals are corroded by rust; and thieves break into the houses of the rich to seize their treasures, and often to attempt their lives. However wealth be secured, it is uncertain, and far more constantly a source of vexation and disappointment than of solid comfort. Such things are not the Christian's *treasure*: the acquisition of them should not be his object: he should be

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22 The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.

If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

contented without them; and if they be intrusted to him, he should neither store them up for himself, nor spend them on himself, but lay them out in doing good. Heavenly things are his treasure: these he should prize and seek, in diligent faith and prayer, and in the improvement of his talents. They are not liable to decay or uncertainty, nor can he be robbed or deprived of them. This is a matter of the greatest importance: for if a man's treasure be laid up on earth, his heart will be earthly; and all his thoughts, affections, projects, conduct, and conversation, will be earthly. But if heavenly things be chosen, as a man's most valuable treasure, his heart will be heavenly, he will continually be thinking about spiritual matters; his very soul will be, as it were, in heaven: and this will give a heavenly savour to all his discourse, and the whole tenour of his actions; and preserve him from, or strengthen him against, those temptations which ruin worldly men, and will quicken him in every part of duty. The word rendered *rust*, is by some thought to signify the vermin which devour corn in the field and the granary: that translated *corrupted*, is the same before rendered *disfigured*. (16.)—Before fashions changed in that manner which they have done for some time past, wardrobes formed a considerable part of the riches laid up by worldly men, and left to their heirs.

V. 22, 23. The preceding truths are here illustrated by an apt similitude. The actions of the whole body are directed according to the light received by the eye: when that organ is *single*, or clear, and perceives objects as they really are, the whole body has light, and the man moves with safety and propriety: but if the eye be evil, and see things confusedly and without distinction, he stumbles as in the dark, and is continually liable to lose his way, or run into danger. Thus an enlightened understanding, perceiving objects according to their real nature and value, enables a man to form a proper judgment, to make a wise choice, and to conduct himself aright respecting them. But a darkened mind, leading to a mistaken estimate of things, produces an erroneous choice: and the more earnestly any one proceeds, the further he wanders from the way. If, then, that which is supposed by any one to be his *chief wisdom* be indeed *folly*; if his first principle be an error; the light that is in him is darkness, and how intense and fatal must that darkness be!

—This immediately relates to men's practical judgment of earthly and heavenly things. The worldly man is mistaken in his first principle; and therefore all his reasonings and calculations must be erroneous, and the further he goes, the more fatally is he bewildered. But it is equally applicable

3 v. 10. Josh.
xxiv. 15, 19, 20.
1 Kings. x. 21.
2 Kings. x. 21.
32. 1 Kings. x. 21.
33. 1 Kings. x. 21.
34. 1 Kings. x. 21.
35. 1 Kings. x. 21.
36. 1 Kings. x. 21.
37. 1 Kings. x. 21.
38. 1 Kings. x. 21.
39. 1 Kings. x. 21.
40. 1 Kings. x. 21.
41. 1 Kings. x. 21.
42. 1 Kings. x. 21.
43. 1 Kings. x. 21.
44. 1 Kings. x. 21.
45. 1 Kings. x. 21.
46. 1 Kings. x. 21.
47. 1 Kings. x. 21.
48. 1 Kings. x. 21.
49. 1 Kings. x. 21.
50. 1 Kings. x. 21.

24 ¶ No man can ^a serve two masters : for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and ^b Mammon.

25 Therefore ⁱ I say unto you, ^k Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. ^l Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26 Behold ^m the fowls of the air : for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet ⁿ your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27 Which of you, ^o by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature?

36. Ps. xxxix. 6. Ec. iii. 14. Luke xii. 25, 26. 1 Cor. xii. 18.

28 And ^p why take ye thought for raiment? Consider ^q the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin :

29 And yet I say unto you, That ^r even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, ^s if God so ^t clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, ^u shall he not much more ^v clothe you, ^w O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, ^x What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithall shall we be clothed?

32 (For ^y after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) ^z for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

to false religion: when that which a man deems extraordinary illumination, whether from philosophy or enthusiasm, is a mere delusion, his very light is thick darkness from the bottomless pit; all his inferences and proceedings lead him further from God, from truth, and holiness, and plunge him still deeper into error, prejudice, spiritual pride, and the snare of the prince of darkness. This is an awful, yet a common case: how very carefully then should we examine our leading principles by the word of God, and with earnest prayer for the teaching of his Holy Spirit!

V. 24. A man may do some service to two masters, but he can *devote himself to the service* of no more than one; and God requires the whole man, and will not share the heart with the world. When the two masters and their interests are in full opposition to each other, the impossibility of serving both of them is evident. This is the case in respect of God and the world; they are two opposites; he who loves and holds to the world as his master, will be an enemy and despiser of God; and he who loves and cleaves to the service of God, will renounce the friendship and despise the frown of the world. So that we cannot serve God and Mammon. This is the Syriac word for riches, and seems used as the name of an idol; the covetous man is an idolater, and therefore no true servant or worshipper of God, who is jealous, and will endure no rivals. By a proper arrangement of our worldly concerns, in subordination and subservency to religion, we may render them a part of God's service, as worldly men make their religion a part of the service of Mammon: but the two opposite services cannot be attended to. 'We love Mammon more than God, when we pursue it by unlawful means; by a lie, as Ziba and Gehazi; by oppression, theft, violence, or false testimony: for in all these cases, we despise God's authority to obtain Mammon. When our labour or concernment in these temporals doth cause us to be remiss in our duty to God; and when we cannot part with them for his sake, but rather choose to part with our interest

'in spiritual than in temporal blessings: then we certainly cleave to them more than God; and him we comparatively despise.' (Whitby.)

V. 25—32. The anxious fear of want, and solicitude about a future provision, often as much ensnare the poor, as the love of wealth does the rich. Therefore Christ expressly enjoined his disciples to "take no thought for their lives, &c." There is a care about temporal things, which is a duty, according to a man's station in the world. He should mind diligently, and with prudent contrivance, his proper business; he should provide for himself and family, as far as honest industry will go; he should calculate and contrive to live within the bounds of his income, that he may not needlessly be embarrassed with debts; he should see that none of God's bounty be wasted or lavished; he should make such arrangements as he is able for those demands, that will be hereafter made on him; he should spare needless expense, that he may not want, nor be constrained to beg, in sickness, infirmity, or old age; and he even may, and in some cases ought, to make a moderate provision for his family, if he can do it consistently with justice, piety, and charity: yet there is much danger lest these cares be extended beyond due bounds. None ought, however, to be solicitous about events, or anxious how he shall be provided for *in future*. This is the Lord's part; and when any take it on themselves, they distrust and dishonour him, become their own tormentors, and are often tempted to sinful methods of making provision for themselves or families. This is the *care or solicitude*, that is prohibited. The Christian, trusting in God, and attending to his duty, must not be anxious about the continuance or support of his life; he must neither be much concerned about the measure of his supplies, nor the manner in which they are to be obtained. The Author of his life and the Former of his body, having done greater things for him, should be depended on for the less; and food and raiment should be sought and expected from him. This great Householder (so to speak) of the universe "openeth his hand, and filleth all his creatures with

z 1 Kings iii 11
- 19. xiii 12
2 Chr. i 7-12
xxxi 20, 21
Psal. vi 1-5
16, 24, 30
2, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100
11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100
11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

33 But ^a seek ye first ^a the kingdom of God, and ^a his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

"his bounty;" the birds of the air, that are so gay and cheerful, are provided for by his care, without any of their own; for they are not able to use any means for their sustenance. And surely the believer is far more valuable in the sight of his heavenly Father, both as a rational creature and as a spiritual worshipper, than the birds of the air! Indeed, such cares are altogether vain. No man could add a cubit to the height of his stature, if he were ever so solicitous about it, and therefore no man thinks of it: and in fact no anxious care can add to the length of men's lives, or to their health, comfort, or prosperity. It is equally absurd to be anxious about raiment; even the lilies of the field, which are incapable of adorning themselves, are far more beautifully decorated than Solomon (or any earthly monarch), in his royal robes. And hath the Lord with such profusion adorned the very vegetables, that will so soon be cut down, withered, dried up, or burned? And will he not suitably clothe the Christian? Or should he be desirous of such vain adornings as are outdone by the flowers of the field? This must arise from weakness of faith, respecting the truths and promises of God, which will expose a man to just rebukes. Such solicitous distrustful inquiries about temporal things may consist with the character of those that know not God, who consequently must count the world their portion, and rely on their own foresight for obtaining the good things of it: but Christians have a nobler Portion and a better Provider. Their Father knoweth what they want; and he hath sufficient power, truth, goodness, and love to them, to send what is best for them: their anxiety is then entirely superfluous. The clause, "a cubit to his stature," is by many learned men understood to mean, "an addition to the length of a man's life." The original word for *stature*, certainly often means *age*; but it is used in Greek authors for *stature*, or the size of plants, &c.: and, probably, no instance can be given of *cubit* being used as a measure of time. Fuel is very scarce in the eastern parts of the world; and the stalks of lilies, and other large flowers, when withered, would be very useful in heating ovens, and for similar purposes. A few passages have been quoted from the writings of heathen philosophers, to show that some of them used the same arguments against *carefulness*, which our Lord here employs: but they are brought from those writers who lived after Christianity was established; and, it is highly probable, were derived from the New Testament, by those who thence took materials to improve that philosophy by which they opposed the Gospel: and in this they have had many followers.

V. 33, 34. The blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, the righteousness in which his subjects are justified, the grace by which they are sanctified, and the good works in which they are to walk, are intended by the "kingdom of God and his righteousness." Our Lord therefore calls his disciples to seek admission into this kingdom by re-

34 Take therefore ^a no thought for the morrow: ^a for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. ^a Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

penance and faith, and every means of grace; and to press forward to the full participation of its privileges, and conformity to the law and example of their righteous King; and also to seek the purity, peace, prosperity, and enlargement of the kingdom, the honour of their Prince, and the good of their fellow subjects. These must be sought "in the first place," as the first object, with the first of their affections and time; beginning the year, the month, the week, and the day with this business, and ordering all things in subserviency to it. In this case their bountiful Father will add all those things which pertain to this present life, without their anxious carefulness: but they who reverse this order, take the way to ruin themselves in respect of this world and that which is to come. The Christian should not be careful so much as about the next day: for it may never arrive to him: and if it do, it will bring its support and supplies with it, and thus, as it were, "take thought for itself." This should be considered as a merciful appointment of his heavenly Father. He knows, that every day brings more trouble and suffering than men can well bear; and he therefore allows, and commands his children to cast all their care about the future on him. And if any will be so absurd as to load themselves with a heavy burden which does not belong to them, and then groan under self-imposed sorrows, they torment themselves as well as dishonour God, by their folly and unbelief. This is also applicable to spiritual things. The Christian, while watching, praying, and attending to his duty, is authorized to trust the Lord for grace sufficient for future trials and temptations, as well as food sufficient for future temporal wants: and in both cases "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-3.

In what various ways doth the evil of our hearts lead us aside from simplicity and godly sincerity! Hypocrites corrupt their duties by corrupt motives; prodigates and infidels excuse their neglect of religion on that account; but Christians must attend on every good work, and every means of grace, from other principles, and with a better intention: and the less they seek reward and honour from men, the more confidently may they expect them from him. What discoveries will be made at the last day! Many an admired character will then be detected as a vain-glorious hypocrite, in his charities, devotions, and austerities. But at that solemn season, the secret charities and fervent prayers of true believers, earnestly seeking the good even of their bitterest enemies; and all their secret self-denial, and mortification of their sinful propensities, out of love to God and holiness, will be openly proclaimed and rewarded. Whilst the most specious part of an ungodly man's character is held forth to view, and his crimes and corrupt motives are studiously concealed, and whilst

CHAP. VII.

Cautions against rash judgment, 1—5. Things holy not to be cast to the dogs, 6. Encouragements to prayer, 7—11. The rule of doing as we would be done to, 12. The straight gate and narrow way, and the wide gate and broad way, 13. A warning against false prophets, who may be known by their fruits, 15—20. No gifts or miracles will avail the

workers of iniquity at the day of judgment, 21—23. The house built on a rock, 24, 25; and that on the sand, 26, 27. Christ concludes, and the people are astonished at his doctrine, 28, 29.

a Is. lxvi. 5. Ez. xli. 52—56. Luke. vi. 37. Rom. ii. 1, 2. xiv. 3, 4, 10—13. 1 Cor. iv. 2—5. Jam. iii. 1, iv. 11, 12. b Judge. i. 7. Ps. xviii. 25, 26. xxxviii. 7, 8. Jer. ii. 21. Or. 15. Mark. iv. 24. Luke. vi. 37. 2 Cor. ix. 6. 2 Thes. i. 6, 7. Jam. ii. 13. Rev. xviii. 6.

JUDGE ^a not, that ye be not judged. ^b 2 For ^b with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

the infirmities of a pious man are noticed, and his good works and holy dispositions veiled with the mantle of humility, the real difference may be but feebly discerned: but when the whole shall be known, all the world will see the one to be meet for heaven, and the other justly deserving of his awful doom. Let us then remember in every thing to act as before, “our Father, who seeth in secret,” and as desiring no reward, but that which he will graciously bestow on his beloved children, for all their works and labour of love.

V. 9—18.

We should especially examine in what frame of mind our prayers and supplications are offered; and learn daily from Christ how to pray with acceptance, and confidence of success: for this is a concern of vast importance. If we truly desire his glory and favour, and deliverance from guilt, temptation; and sin, above all other things, we may be sure that he will answer our prayers. If he hath taught us to forgive our brethren for his sake, we may be assured of his ready forgiveness of our sins, though many and aggravated: if we desire to have him for our Father in Christ Jesus, and to possess the spirit, and act in the character, of his children, we may come near, and call upon, and confide in him as our Father; and they that refuse to do thus must shortly be dragged before him as their awful Judge. But let all beware of malice and revenge; for whatever a man profess, if he forgive not others, God hath not forgiven him; and will not forgive him, if he continue of this rancorous disposition. A sour and gloomy countenance is no part of religion, nor any ornament to the profession of it, and it often covers a proud hypocritical heart: but real humility, sorrow for sin, and deadness to the world, should be accompanied by a decent and unaffected cheerfulness in the sight of men.

V. 19—24.

We should peculiarly watch and pray against covetousness: treasures on earth can little profit us dying creatures; yet we are in danger of losing them before we die; and they are only certain cares, snares, and vexations. But there is an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for true believers; for this let us labour with all diligence, that we may secure and increase our portion in it, whatever be neglected or renounced for the sake of it. Anxiety about

the world cannot consist with a heavenly mind; for “where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.” Yet multitudes fatally err in this matter: they see all things through a vitiated eye, in which phantoms appear realities, and realities phantoms: thus they wander on in darkness, and know not at what they stumble. So that, after all the warnings Christ hath given us, they persist in a vain attempt to serve God and Mammon. May the Lord preserve us from such false principles and fatal mistakes!

V. 25—34.

Whilst we are careful to choose the good part, to find the right way, to know the state of our souls, and to attend to our present duty, we should not be anxious about future consequences. Let us rely on our heavenly Father to support the lives, and nourish the bodies, which he hath given us; and not trouble ourselves, whether our provision be plentiful, or mean and scanty. Our lives are more than meat, and our bodies than raiment; what then are our souls, which the divine Saviour hath redeemed with his precious blood? Whilst we feast on his spiritual provisions, and are adorned with the robes of righteousness and salvation, we cannot surely doubt his truth and love, which are engaged to feed and clothe us! Will he provide for the fowls, and adorn the fading flowers, and yet starve his beloved children? How unreasonable and shameful is our unbelief! We need his merciful rebuke, and should pray continually to him to increase our faith, and leave it to Gentiles and unbelievers to perplex themselves about such matters. Let us “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,” assured that “all things else shall be added unto us;” as our Father knows what things we want. Thus we shall be encouraged for every duty, and relieved from our fruitless anxieties. We shall indeed find, that “sufficient for the day is the evil of it;” and that we have no need to anticipate future possible pains and sorrows: but we shall also find, that the day will bring its own comforts and supports with it. And all these rules and precepts of our gracious Lord will be known by experience to conduce to our present comfort, as well as to our future benefit, when we shall have done with temptation, be delivered from evil, and employed in praising him, whose is “the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”

NOTES.

CHAP. VII. V. 1, 2. These verses cannot forbid G

c Luke vi. 41, 42.
xviii. 11.
d 2 Sam xii 5, 6.
e 2 Cor xxxviii. 1,
10, 18. 1 Jo 21.
John xiii. 7-9.
Gal vi. 1.

3 And ^c why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, ^d but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

the magistrate to judge and pass sentence on criminals; or the rulers of the Church to censure and exclude such members as disgrace their profession: or Christians to withdraw from every brother that walks disorderly: for these are duties expressly enjoined in Scripture. In like manner, it cannot be supposed, that our Lord intended to forbid his disciples to form a judgment of men's state and character, according to their avowed principles and visible conduct; for in this very chapter he directs us to judge by this rule; (15—20;) and many duties to others absolutely require us to form some judgment, both in respect of their state and their actions. But we ought not to be officious, rash, or severe, in forming our judgment, nor hasty in declaring it. We are not bound to believe an infidel or a profligate to be a true Christian; but we should judge as favourably as we can, where the fundamentals of Christianity are professed, and not disgraced by an inconsistent conduct. We ought to put the best construction on doubtful actions, and never ascribe good ones to bad motives without full proof: we ought to shun curious inquiries into men's conduct, and injurious suspicions: we should avoid giving our opinion to any man's disadvantage, without some duty require it of us: we should not censure or anathematize those who differ from us: or condemn whole sects and societies of men, except as the Scripture evidently condemns them. We should, as far as we can, shun every thing that savours of malevolence or spiritual pride: for the opinion that a Christian must hold of the state of the world around him will give sufficient offence; and it should not be increased by rash and harsh judgments in particular cases. He, who is habitually propense to this self-sufficient, presumptuous, and censorious judging of others, gives great cause to suspect, that he is devoid of true grace himself, and exposed to judgment without mercy from God. If a Christian give in to so evil a spirit and practice, he may expect sharp corrections: both the world and the Church will commonly judge of men, according to their method of judging others. Thus in every sense it is verified, "that with what measure we mete, it will be measured to us again." (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 3—5. These verses show, that though Christ addressed his disciples as the children of God; yet he warned them, on the supposition that there might be hypocrites among them. If a man, whose eye was closed with some obstruction or disease, (which like a beam was evident to all, and could not be seen through,) should curiously spy out some little particle in another man's eye, and officiously offer to remove it, he would render himself ridiculous. His attention ought to be directed to the disordered state of his own eye, and his endeavours be used to remedy it, before he offered his assistance to his brother. Thus, while

5 ^e Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

6 ^f Give not ^g that which is holy unto the dogs, neither ^h cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, ⁱ and turn again and rend you.

xxiii. 13. xxiii. 14. sc. Luke xii. 56. xiii. 16. Ps. li. 9-12. Luke iv. 23 vi. 22 Acts xix. 15. 2 Jo. 14, 15. 2 Jo. 23. Prov. ix. 7, 8. xxiii. 9. xxvi. 11. Acts xiii. 45-47. Phil. iii. 2. 2 Rab. vi. 6. x. 2 Pet. ii. 22. h Prov. xi. 22. i xxiii. 5, 6. xxvi. 10. 2 Cor. xi. 26. 2 Tim. iv. 14, 15.

Christians should watch over one another, and point out and remedy even small mistakes in each other's principles and practice; the man who presumes to reprove little defects, when his own principles, spirit, and conduct, are notoriously wrong, only proves his pride, officiousness, and hypocrisy. He, that would become a wise and a faithful reprover, or minister, must begin at home, and first take heed to himself, and to his doctrine, temper, and conduct: when these are become unexceptionable, he may with propriety, authority, and hope of success, offer his help to his brethren, in rectifying their judgments and promoting their sanctification: yet he will do it with humility, prudence, tenderness, and candour. But, alas! it is observable, that, in *spiritual optics*, a beam in the eye generally renders a man quick sighted in discerning other men's faults, and only blind to his own. It is probable, that our Lord alluded to some proverbial expressions, familiar to his hearers, the knowledge of which would throw more light on the subject, than any criticism on the original words can do. 'There was a proverbial speech among the Jews in and before Christ's time, (set down afterwards with some variation in the Talmud, thus,) 'They which say to others, *Take out the small piece of wood out of thy teeth*, are answered, *Take out the beam out of thine eyes*: to check the importunity of those, who are always censuring and condemning others for small matters, when they themselves are guilty of those things, which are much more to be reprehended.' (*Hammond.*)

V. 6. As every man is not qualified or authorized to be a reprover, so every offender is not the proper subject of reproof. (*Notes, Prov. ix. 7, 8. xxiii. 9.*) To persevere in giving counsel or instruction to some men would be as improper, as to throw the holy things, that were the food of the priests, unto unclean dogs; or to cast pearls before swine. The emblems here used, compared with other scriptures, may be supposed to denote hardened scorners, licentious or covetous professors, fierce and untractable opposers, or manifest apostates. (*Marg. Ref.*) Many truths and instances of the Lord's goodness to us, that are precious to the humble and teachable, are not proper to be communicated to scoffers or abusers of sacred things: they will only be emboldened, or exasperated by them to greater ungodliness, and to show more impious rage and contempt. They will trample under foot, with disdain, all that can be said of experimental religion, or communion with God, as swine would tread pearls in the mire, regardless of their value: and they will be so enraged at holy warnings, reproofs and counsels, that, like fierce dogs, they will be ready to turn again and tear their friendly reprover. The rule may also be extended to the preaching

7 ¶ Ask, * and it shall be given you ;
 I seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it
 shall be opened unto you :

8 For * every one that asketh, receiv-
 eth ; and he that seeketh, findeth ; and to
 him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

9 Or * what man is there of you,
 whom if his son ask bread, will he give
 him a stone ?

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give
 him a serpent ?

11 If ye then, * being evil, know how
 to give good gifts unto your children,
 how much more shall your Father which
 is in heaven, give * good things to them
 that ask him ?

12 Therefore * all things whatsoever
 ye would that men should do to you, do
 ye even so to them : * for this is the law
 and the prophets.

of the Gospel among those, who obstinately contradict and
 blaspheme : and certainly the admission of openly wicked
 and ungodly persons to the Lord's supper, and into the sa-
 cred ministry, is a too common and very grievous violation
 of it.

V. 7—11. (Note, Luke xi. 5—13.) Many important
 and arduous duties had been inculcated, and great wisdom
 and grace would be requisite for the practice of them,
 without turning aside, or running into extremes, on the
 right hand or on the left : our Lord therefore next directed
 and encouraged his auditors to seek help and counsel, and
 every blessing, in earnest prayer, and the use of other means
 of grace ; assuring them that every one, who thus asked,
 sought, and knocked at mercy's gate, would be successful.
 But is there no such thing as asking, and not receiving ?
 Undoubtedly there is ; yet not in the sense here evidently
 intended. A man may ask in vain, when he addresses
 himself to an idol, or tutelary saint, instead of the living
 God : he may ask for what the Lord hath never promised,
 or without feeling any need or desire of the mercy that
 he craves ; he may offer proud and hypocritical prayers ;
 he may crave exemption from punishment whilst he wilful-
 ly cleaves to sin ; he may ask for temporal and spiritual
 blessings, without using other proper means of obtaining
 them ; or he may come in his own name, in contempt
 of the appointed Mediator. A man may seek the world
 first, and then attend to religion, as far as it consists with
 his worldly interests and pursuits ; he may seek salvation
 in a way of his own devising, or in a more smooth and fla-
 tering method than that of the Gospel ; or he may begin
 to seek, when " the Master of the house hath risen up and
 shut to the door ;" nay, a man may knock at mercy's
 gate when he is in a fright, and leave off when his fears
 are vanished. But he, who comes as a sinner to a merci-
 ful God, through the divine Advocate, for all the blessings
 of salvation, in sincerity, and with earnest prayer, waiting
 and persevering, as having hope in this way, and none
 in any other ; he who seeks spiritual blessings in the first
 place, without delay, and in the use of all appointed means ;
 and he who knocks and waits at mercy's gate, as resolved
 to find admission, or to perish knocking, will be sure to
 succeed. The promise is absolute and express ; " Every
 one that asketh, receiveth, &c." Supplicants of this kind
 sometimes receive, and find admission without delay ;
 at other times, in due time : nor will their previous character
 preclude them from the benefit ; for he, who opened the
 way of access, hath taught them to come in it, and " he

giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." Indeed,
 (as our Lord hath added,) it would be most dishonourable
 to God to suppose the contrary, after all the displays
 that he hath given of his fatherly compassion to sinners.
 For what man would put off his hungry child, when impor-
 tunately asking food of him, with a useless stone instead
 of a loaf, or a noxious serpent instead of a fish ? He
 would not deserve the name of a father, or even of a man,
 that could act in such a manner. If therefore men, who
 are all corrupt and selfish, and who cannot give to their
 children without lessening their store, and often straiten-
 ing themselves, are yet instructed by natural affection to
 give salutary and useful gifts to their children, how much
 more shall our heavenly Father, whose goodness and
 riches are infinite, give *good things*, even all things that
 pertain and conduce to salvation, to all them who humbly
 ask them of him ? Christ says not, " to his children," lest
 the trembling suppliant should be disconcerted by the
 apprehension that he was not one of them ; but, " to
 them that ask him," that the very act of asking might
 give the assurance of being heard, and of receiving the
 desired mercy. It is observable, that our Lord assumed
 it as the principle from which he argued, that *they were*
evil : the very word, that in some places is used for the
 wicked one. " What man is there among you, in all
 " this numerous assembly, who, if his son, &c.?"—
 " This seems to be the emphasis of the original. Young
 preachers will, I hope, observe, how much life and
 force it adds to these discourses of our Lord, that they
 are so closely directed, through the whole of them, as
 an immediate address to the hearers ; and are not loose
 and general harangues in the manner of those *Essays*,
 which are now grown so fashionable in pulpits." (Do-
 dridge.)

V. 12. The example of the truth and mercy of God,
 the encouragement thus afforded, and his readiness to
 pardon, assist, and accept us, constitute the primary argu-
 ment with which this rule is enforced, and form its connex-
 ion with the preceding verses. It is not only enacted as a
 strict and holy law, but it is proposed to believers, as
 their rule of duty, with abundant motives and encourage-
 ments, that, by observing it, they may glorify God, and
 show their gratitude for his mercy : and it is worthy of our
 consideration, that moral precepts, thus enforced, are very
 different from the same rules of action, when prescribed by
 human moralists, without authority, sanction, efficacious
 motive, or promise. This precept hath generally been

11 Jer xxxiii 14 Hos xiv 2 Marg Luke ii 10, 11,
 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix
 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii
 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim
 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

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11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7 2 Sam vii 19 Ps lxxxvi 5, 15, 16, 17, 18 Mic vi 8, 9 Mal i 6 Rom v 8—10 vii 32 Eph ii 4, 5 1 John i 1, 6, 7 Luke ii 10, 11, 12 Cor ix 8—15 Tit iii 4—7 Luke vi 31.—xxxii 39, 40 Lev xix 16, 18, 17, 18 Jer vii 5, 6 Ez vii 7, 8 21 Am v 14, 15 Mic vi 8 Zech vii 7—10 xiii 16, 17 Mal ii 5 Mark xii 23—34 Rom xii 6—10 Gal v 13, 14 1 Tim 5 Jam ii 10—13.

11 Gen vi 5 viii, 12 Job xv 16, 17 Jer xvii 9 Rom iii 9—10 Gal iii 22 Eph i 1—3 Tit iii 3 Ex xxxvi 6—7

u. 1, 2 R xvii. 13 **¶ Enter ye in** at the strait gate: **for wide is the gate,** and broad is the way, **which leadeth to destruction,** and narrow is the way, **which leadeth to life.** **¶ And few there be which find it.**

many there be which go in thereat: **14 * Because strait is the gate,** and narrow is the way, **which leadeth unto life,** and few there be that find it.

* Or, *Hom.* xxi. 23, 25 Prov. iv. 26, 27 vii. 20 ix. xxx. 21. xxxv. 8. lvi. 11. Jer. vii. 34. Mar. viii. 34. John xv. 19-20. John xii. 32 xlii. 22

admired, and called the *golden rule*: it is indeed equivalent to that of "loving our neighbour as ourselves," and contains the substance of the second table of the law, and of all the exhortations and instructions of the prophets *on that subject*; for it would be absurd to suppose our Lord to mean, that it contained all that was written concerning the love of God, or all the types and prophecies of a Saviour. 'This rule, being given as the sum of the law and the prophets, can never duly be so construed, as to subvert any of the laws and orders established by them. Therefore it admits these limitations. What I desire, agreeably to the principles of the Christian religion, should be done or not done to me, that I must do, or not do, to others. It therefore will not follow, that if Socrates would lend his wife to a friend, that friend should do the like to him; because that is opposite to the law and the prophets. A criminal would not have the judge to condemn him; yet a judge must not forbear to condemn,—for that would take away vindictive justice, and let offenders go unpunished. The rule requires not the master to obey his servants, because he would have them obedient to him; but to be as obedient to his masters, as he can reasonably expect they should be to him; and to treat his servants as kindly as he could reasonably desire to be treated by his master. And so in other relations.—This rule must not be extended to every thing which a man may do lawfully. A poor man would desire that some very wealthy person would give him out of his estate enough to make him rich; though were this rich man poor, he would be glad, if somebody would show the same kindness to him; yet he is not obliged, though lawfully he might do it, to make this poor man rich.' (*Whitby*.) Certainly we are not required to do to others whatsoever we might *unreasonably* desire them to do, if we were in their case. But judging according to the rule of duty, in all its latitude, and the feelings of our own minds, we should suppose ourselves to be in the situation of our neighbour; and then impartially inquire, how we might *reasonably* expect him to behave toward us, if he were exactly in our situation. Every man, at first sight, must perceive, that this would preclude all fraud, oppression, slander, sarcasms, and uncandid judgments; and that it would lead to universal justice, truth, goodness, gentleness, compassion, beneficence, forgiveness, and candour. If we honestly proceed in this way, we shall seldom need a casuist, to teach us how we ought to act towards our neighbours in any possible relation or circumstance. But alas! even most professed Christians content themselves with doing to others as they are done by; instead of doing those things to others, which they *would* have others do to them. 'This maxim will be a proper monitor, in common conversation; in negotiation and commerce; in cases where others need our compassion and kindness; in censures and reflections on others; in provocations;

—in the several relations of life; and in religious differences; and the use of such words as Schismatic and Heretic.' (*Evans*.)

V. 13, 14. Our Lord's audience consisted of untaught disciples, and of the multitude; and both needed to be excited to greater earnestness in the concerns of their souls; for which purpose, he next gave them this important exhortation and solemn warning. Our passage through life is represented as a journey to the eternal world; and as there are two places to which men are removed at death, so there are two roads, one to destruction, the other to heavenly happiness. The gate at which men enter into the broad road is very wide, even as wide as the whole fallen race of Adam: for we enter at it when we are born sinners into a sinful world, and we proceed on that road as long as we live in an unconverted state. As it is *broad*, it hath in it various paths, suited to men's different humours and inclinations. The covetous and the spendthrift; the infidel; the profligate, and the hypocrite; the Antinomian, and the Pharisee; the sons and daughters of levity and giddy dissipation; grave designing politicians, and proud philosophers; decent moralists, and infamous debauchees; have their several paths and their select companies: they mutually despise and condemn each other, yet they all keep one another in countenance, by agreeing to oppose the holy ways of the Lord. In this way men walk without trouble, contrivance, or even intention; whilst they are pleasing or forgetting themselves, they make progress in it, and even when they are wasting their time in sleep or loitering: and as it is thronged by the many, and especially by the rich, wise, noble, and honourable of the world, many of its paths are fashionable and creditable; so that numbers have no suspicion whither it leads, and are displeased with those who give them warning, till at length they fall into destruction. But when a man hears and believes the voice of Christ, speaking by his word and his ministers, he discovers whither this way tends, and feels the necessity of getting out of it; he makes a stand, and determines to proceed no further; and he learns that, by repentance, faith in Christ, and conversion to God and holiness, he may get into another way, that leads to life. But the gate is strait: sinful pleasures, prospects, interests, and connexions, must be relinquished: a man must lay aside his encumbrances, his pride, and darling lusts; he must be humbled, stripped, and emptied; he must break loose from those that would retain him, and force his way through those that would impede his course: he must deny himself, take up his cross, resist temptation, mortify the flesh, endure reproach, earnestly use all the means of grace, and cordially accept of Christ in all his characters and offices, or he cannot get in at this strait gate. After he hath entered, "the way is narrow," or afflicted, and, as it were, beset with thorns; it is *afflicted*, because it is *narrow*. It is the direct way of implicit faith and obedience: a Christian cannot pick and choose his path,

1. xxi 17
Mark xii. 38
Luke xii. 15
Act. xiii. 40
Phil. iii. 2
Col. ii. 8
2 Pet. iii. 17

2. xxi 4, 5
24, 25
Deut. xiii. 1-3
18
15, 16
2 Pet. xxi. 13
14-16
xxviii
15-17
xxix 21

3. xxi 16
22
Zech. xiii. 4
Mark xii. 22, 23
2 Pet. ii. 1-3
1 John iv. 1
Rev. xix 20.

4. xxi 17
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15 ^b Beware of ^c false prophets, ^d which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they ^e are ravening wolves.

16 Ye ^f shall know them by their fruits. ^g Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so ^h every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; ⁱ but a corrupt tree

bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree ^k cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that ^l bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore ^m by their fruits ye shall know them.

as men do in the broad road; but must go straight forward, turning neither to the right nor the left: if he do, he will be scourged back again into the narrow path. When he meets an enemy, he must face and overcome him; when he comes to a mountainous difficulty, he must climb over it; if the road be rough, he must still keep in it; and no persecution or tribulation must divert him from it: therefore "few there be that find" this way to life. Most men either neglect religion entirely, or rest in forms or notions; or are deluded into some of those more soothing, flattering, and fashionable species of religion, which "Satan, transformed into an angel of light," takes care to propose to them, when uneasy about their souls. They are deterred from entering at the strait gate and treading the narrow way, and by the difficulties to be encountered, and by the dread of being wrought singular and precise; and they hope to get to heaven at an easier rate: for they know not that this way hath also its peculiar joys and consolations, which abundantly compensate for its difficulties and trials. Therefore Christ warned his hearers, and all men, to enter in at the strait gate, without delay and with all earnestness; and to fear nothing so much as being left without: for though the entrance is difficult, and found only by few, yet all who resolutely attempt it will succeed; and it leadeth to eternal life, whilst all other ways lead to destruction. It is surprising how much this plain declaration of Christ hath been overlooked by his professed disciples; and how much pains have been taken to soften the apparent asperity of it, and to explain away its evident meaning. It cannot be inconsistent with the rule of not judging others, to suppose that most men are in the way to destruction, and to warn and exhort them to enter in at the strait gate, when such words are repeatedly found in the Scripture, and too plainly commented upon by the worldly and ungodly lives of the multitudes around us. (Note, Luke xiii. 23-30.) In all ages hitherto, the real disciple of Christ hath been a singular and unfashionable character; and all that have sided with the majority have gone on in the broad road to destruction. (Eph. ii. 1-3.)

V. 15-20. False prophets were the most dangerous enemies to true religion under the old dispensation; and false teachers have been the same, in all ages and places where Christianity hath been professed. (Marg. Ref.) Nothing so much prevents men from entering in at the strait gate, and becoming true Christians, as the carnal, soothing, and flattering doctrine of those who oppose or pervert the truth. Our Lord therefore warned the people to beware of false prophets. These would come in sheep's

clothing, i. e. with great appearances of sanctity, harmlessness, and love to men's souls; but inwardly they would be greedy, fierce, and implacable, like ravening wolves: they would "teach things which they ought not," for filthy lucre's sake, and be ready to devour all that opposed their pernicious systems. They might "be known by their fruits;" that is, by the nature, tendency, and effects of their doctrine, especially as exemplified in their own spirit and conduct: for they would certainly betray themselves by their selfishness or self-sufficiency; their arrogance or ambition; their eagerness for disputation or persecution; their vehement passions, or embittered resentment; or by some part of their habitual temper and conduct being evidently contrary to the mind of Christ, and the disinterested humility, meekness, purity, and love, which characterize his true disciples and ministers. And he who regards Christ's words will no more expect real good from following such unchristian teachers, than he would hope to gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles. In fact, they commonly infect all, over whom they acquire influence, with their own corrupt principles, their spiritual pride, their selfishness, their wrath and malignity. A good tree may indeed be expected to yield good fruit; but a corrupt tree in the nature of things must bring forth evil fruit. The habitual conduct of a truly pious man must be good, and the tendency of his example, converse, and instructions, must be beneficial; but the habitual tenour of an unconverted man's actions must be evil, and the effects of his example and doctrine pernicious, however it may be disguised. And as the Judge will shortly decide upon the characters of professed Christians by this rule; and "every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire," (Note, iii. 10;) so we ought to judge, as well as we are able, by the same rule at present: "by their fruits we must know them," and not by their fair speeches; nor can they be supposed to be really leading others in the way to heaven, who are apparently themselves treading the contrary road. The decent, friendly, and almost fascinating manners of some, who have taught doctrines plainly contrary to Scripture, has been thought an almost insuperable objection to interpreting the clause, "By their fruits ye shall know them," of the character and actions of false prophets; and no doubt Satan will endeavour, for the credit of his cause, and to give energy to delusion, that "his ministers should be transformed as ministers of righteousness." Yet in this very passage the apostle declares that "their end shall be according to their works," The virtue or amableness, for which

V. 24—27. To impress more deeply the preceding solemn declaration, our Lord closed his discourse with a most affecting comparison. Doubtless he is the Rock, the only sure and tried Foundation, on which the Church, and every believer's soul and hope, are built, and "other foundation can no man lay." But this is not the subject: for not the false foundation of the infidel or pharisee, but that of the hypocritical disciple, is detected. The persons, of whom Christ spake, are not hearers of Plato, or Seneca, or ancient philosophers, Jewish Rabbies, or modern deists: but they *hear his Gospel*, and "call him Lord, Lord;" and thus they profess to build, for eternity, a house, or refuge, in which they may be safe in every approaching season of dismay or danger. All

xiii 54 Psalv.
2. Mark i 22
vi 2 Luke iv
xix 48
John vii 15 48

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine ;

else are even still further from the true Foundation. One of the characters, here intended, resembles a wise man, that digs deep, bestows pains, removes the rubbish, finds the rock, and on it lays firmly the foundation of his house, and proceeds to raise the superstructure with good materials and sound workmanship, until it is completed. In this he takes up his abode : and soon after, storms arise, the winds blow, the rains descend, the floods swell, and the house is vehemently beaten on ; but it stands secure amid the fury of the tempest, because founded on a rock. This wise builder is the true Christian : he comes to Christ, hears his words, and believes them : instructed by the Saviour as his Prophet, he trusts in his righteousness, atonement, and mediation. He submits also to him as his Lord, and obeys his commandments from love to his name : he consults him as his Physician, and follows his directions, to obtain the health and sanctification of his soul. In short, he says, " Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do ? " and he aims to render unreserved obedience. Thus he builds upon the Rock, in faith working by love and producing obedience : his soul is upheld by the power and grace of the divine Redeemer ; everlasting arms support him amidst the temptations, tribulations, and persecutions of life, and in the hour of death ; and he will be safe as in a castle, amidst the convulsions of expiring nature, and all the solemnities of the day of judgment. But there is another builder, a foolish man, who pretends to build on the same Rock, but, for want of care and pains, he lays his foundation beside it upon a quicksand : on this he erects a specious edifice, which greatly resembles the other, and which the superficial observer thinks equally stable : but when it is assailed by storms and floods, it falls with a terrible ruin, and the disappointed builder perishes in it.—This is the deluded professor of the Gospel, who perhaps hears and assents to its doctrines, and learns to speak and dispute about them ; nay, associates with Christians, adopts their creed, and possesses gifts, joins in sacred ordinances, and seems to be one of them. But his knowledge puffeth up, his faith is dead, and he is not obedient. What he does externally according to the commands of Christ, is done from corrupt selfish motives, and not from willing subjection to his authority ; so that he disobeys, where interest, inclination, or reputation require it : his hope is a delusion, he is a worker of iniquity ; and so builds on the sand without a foundation. This is a common, unsuspected, but fatal, delusion : there are many, of various descriptions and discordant sentiments, who thus hear Christ's sayings, and do them not : their profession may perhaps stand the lighter gusts of temptation, in times of outward peace and prosperity : but the tempests of fierce persecution would make dreadful havoc among these edifices ; and the storms of death and judgment will sweep them away ; separate them from those of God's people, and leave all that take refuge in them, in the deepest ruin, contempt, and misery. (*Marg. Ref.*) It is argued, that our Lord, by the words, " Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, &c." shows, that this sermon contains

29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

cy 23 26 32 44.
xxi 27.
xxvi 13 Doct.
xxvi 16, 19 Ec.
xiii 10 Heb
iv 12, 13 — g kv. 1—9. xxiii 2—6. 15—21 Mark vii 5—13. Luke xx 8, 46, 47.

all things needful for salvation : and probably many conclude, that the doctrinal parts of the New Testament are not so needful and important, as these practical instructions. But, most certainly, the unchangeable God never meant to recommend one part of his revealed will, by disparaging another. And who have ever, in any age, uprightly and unreservedly obeyed these sayings of our Lord, except they, who have firmly believed the doctrines of the Gospel, as more clearly and fully revealed in the apostolical epistles ? This sermon, doubtless, contains the grand outlines of *Christian practice* ; and none who, on *Christian principles*, observe to do according to it, will come short of salvation. But *Christian principles*, or *doctrines*, must be learned from other parts of the sacred oracles.

V. 28, 29. The multitudes ; who heard this interesting discourse, were astonished at the wisdom, weight, and energy of Christ's doctrine, and the majesty and authority with which he enforced it. They perceived, that his important instructions had a commanding influence on their understandings, consciences, and affections, which forced their conviction and approbation ; and that he spake in a very different manner from their scribes, who only inculcated ceremonial observances, external duties, and their own traditions, or those of some renowned Rabbi, in a dry uninteresting manner.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—6.

Whilst we are careful not to call evil good, or darkness light ; we should also guard against a censorious spirit, the offspring of pride and petulance ; or we shall prepare bitterness for ourselves, and may expect sharp rebukes from God, and harsh censures from man. But why should we, who have so much to be humbled for, and to rectify, in our own conduct, officiously expose our brother's faults, which perhaps are far less heinous than our own ? Rather let us seek for more self-knowledge, a sounder judgement, more humility, and grace to walk more circumspectly ; that if we have the opportunity, we may have ability, influence, and tenderness, to counsel, caution, and reprove our brethren with propriety and efficacy.—How unfit must the unconverted be for the ministry ! Yet how many such enter into that arduous office, and attempt to take notes out of the eyes of others, without considering the beam that is in their own eye ! The minister of Christ is indeed a reprover by office ; and must " rebuke with all authority." It is therefore peculiarly needful for all who aspire after that office, to begin by " casting the beam out of their own eye, that they may see clearly to cast out the mote out of their brother's eye." And all, engaged in the work, should be very careful not to expose themselves to the retort, " Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye." It should, however, be observed, that a discernible mote in a man's eye does not disqualify him from casting out a beam from

CHAP. VIII.

Christ cleanses a leper, 1—4; heals a Centurion's servant, and predicts the calling of the Gentiles and rejection of the Jews, 5—13: heals Peter's wife's mother, 14, 15, and many others, ful-

filling a prophecy of Isaiah, 16, 17; shows how he ought to be followed, 18—22: calms the tempestuous sea by his word, 23—27: and casts out devils from two possessed men; suffering them to go into the swine, 28—32. The Gergesenes desire him to leave them, 33, 34.

another man's eye: yet many harden themselves in gross sins against the reproofs of ministers, because they see that they also are liable to imperfections. But prudence and fortitude, as well as a good cause and a good intention, are requisite for the performance of the office of a reprover: we must expect to meet with unreasonable men, who will scoff at the most precious truths, and rage against the most just and friendly warnings; and should therefore prepare for contempt and persecution, with meekness and firmness: and we shall often be constrained to let the proud and impious scorner alone, lest we should drive him to further extremities of madness and blasphemy. But if holy counsels and warnings should not be thrown away on such hardened offenders, how deplorable is it, when the most sacred ordinances and offices of the Church are left open to their profanation, if they choose to do it for filthy lucre's sake? Surely this is, in the worst sense, to give that which is holy to the dogs, and to cast pearl before swine!

V. 7—12.

Amidst all the evils which we witness, and all the wants, weakness, and folly, that we experience, let us give ourselves unto prayer. Thus let the sinner seek reconciliation to God, and the believer all that he wants for his honourable and comfortable walk with him: but let us seek and pray with earnestness, importunity, and perseverance, and with a believing expectation of success. For the promise is express, that every one that asketh receiveth: if therefore men say, that they do ask, seek, and knock, and yet evidently do not obtain, but remain enslaved to their sins, we must conclude, that they either deceive themselves, or mean to deceive others. "Let God be true, and every man a liar," if men have not it, it is because they ask not; or because they ask amiss, and from some carnal and corrupt motive. We should, therefore, seek wisdom, knowledge, grace, strength, and every good thing, in this authorized way, without regarding objectors or despisers. Let us begin and go on to the end, resting on the promises, and they will carry us safe through, as they have done innumerable numbers who are now in glory. Let us never suppose, that our heavenly Father would erect a throne of grace, appoint a Mediator, command us to pray, and incline our hearts to it; and then at last refuse to hear, or give us what would be useless or pernicious, instead of the Bread of life and the blessings of salvation! Far be it from us to listen to such suggestions of the enemy, or suspect our merciful God of a conduct, that would be a disgrace to one of the sinful race of men! Assured, therefore, of his willingness to give good things to all that ask him, let us copy the example of his purity, truth, and goodness: and "whatsoever we would

"that men should do unto us," let us study to "do the same to them;" not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but doing good against evil, and overcoming evil with good.

V. 13—20.

We ought ever to keep in mind the awful truth, that "wide is the gate, and broad the way, which leadeth to destruction, and there be many who go in thereat." If we would serve God, we must be singular, as well as resolute, in religion. We "must be born again, or we cannot see the kingdom of God;" we must believe in Christ, and be in him new creatures, and thenceforth lead sober, righteous, and godly lives, or we cannot be saved: and facts demonstrate that so straight is this gate, and narrow this way, that "few there be that find them." Yet every one that seeketh, findeth, and to him that knocketh, the gate shall be opened: and though the way hath its difficulties, and is painful to the flesh, yet it hath its comforts, "which a stranger intermeddleth not with." The entrance is commonly more arduous than the further progress, to those who set out resolutely; and the hope of heaven, and joy in the Holy Ghost, combine to render it "the way of pleasantness and the path of peace." But let all, who would tread this narrow way, beware of those who prophesy smooth things, who invent easier ways to heaven, and more pleasing to corrupt nature. Such are ministers of Satan transformed into ministers of righteousness: these beguile unstable souls, and prejudice them against the pure religion of Christ, and those that teach it. Whatever specious appearances they assume, they are actuated by ambition, vain-glory, avarice, or some corrupt principle, and are wolves in sheep's clothing. The disciple of Christ, who keeps his Master's character and precepts in view as the standard of his judgment, will generally see through them. By their fruits he will know them from the faithful servants of his Lord, and will not expect to gather grapes or figs from thorns or thistles. He will know, that a good tree cannot habitually bring forth such evil fruit, any more than a corrupt tree can bring forth good fruit; and, looking forward to the time, when "every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire," he will keep at a distance from, lest he should be deceived by, them. But, alas! most men establish other rules of judgment than the word of God: and a confident tone, a voluble tongue, a zeal for some parts of religion in opposition to others, or new notions plausibly dressed up and defended, go much further than a Christian spirit and conversation, and the plain faithful preaching of the whole doctrine of the Gospel: so that "many follow the pernicious ways" of deceivers, by "reason of whom the way of truth is evil spoken of."

WHEN he was ^a come down from the mountain, ^b great multitudes followed him.

2 And, ^c behold, there came ^d a leper and ^e worshipped him, saying, Lord, ^f if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

3 And Jesus ^g put forth his hand, and

touched him, saying, ^h I will; be thou clean. ⁱ And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

4 And Jesus saith unto him, ^k See thou tell no man; but go thy way, ^l shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that

Moses commanded, ^m for a testimony unto them.

V. 21—29.

We must cease from man, if we would hear the decision of our future Judge: he assures us, that, "not every one that calls him Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he only that doeth the will of his heavenly Father." Let us remember that real grace is far more valuable than the most splendid accomplishments, and even than the gift of prophecy and miracles. If the most admired and useful minister on earth had no better evidence of his conversion, than his abilities and success as a preacher, he would "preach to others, and be himself a cast-away;" whilst the meanest believer in his audience would be received into the mansions of felicity. Let us then take warning by our Lord's solemn admonitions, and "examine ourselves whether we be indeed in the faith," and whether we have that love, without which all other attainments are nothing. (*Notes, 1 Cor. xiii.*) Let us beware not only of infidelity, profligacy, and self-righteousness; but of a dead faith, a formal profession, an abuse of the Gospel. Let no man imagine that he builds on the one tried Foundation, who only hears the words of Christ, but does not obey them: alas! he builds upon the sand, as fatally as the open enemy of evangelical truth: his edifice may rise fair and magnificent; but it will fall, when he most wants it: then his folly will be manifest, and his ruin most tremendous. May the Lord make us wise builders for eternity; may we come to Christ, hear and believe his word, and show our faith by our works of conscientious unreserved obedience. Then we may be sure that "no thing shall ever separate us from the love of Christ;" and may look forward with joyful expectation of smiling in the agonies of death, and triumphing when the world shall be one common conflagration.—Finally, may the Lord send forth many preachers, who may declare the same great truths and precepts which Christ did, and with some measure of his energy, influence, and authority: may the lives and examples of all preachers of the Gospel give a sanction to their doctrine, for the conviction of their hearers; and may they, whose "word is as fire, and as the hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces," every where supplant those, who still continue to teach after the manner of the Scribes and Pharisees of old.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII. V. 1—4. (*Marg. Ref.*) In commenting on those miracles, parables, or discourses, which are recorded by more than one of the evangelists, I purpose to be more particular where they first occur, and to reserve only the additional circumstances and variations, to

be considered in the other Gospels; except where the other evangelists are more full and copious in their narrative.—The harmony of the evangelists has given immense trouble to many expositors, and yet many things remain in great uncertainty: as it is, therefore, a matter of far more difficulty than importance to us, (for we are more concerned to know what Christ said and did, than at what time, or in what order, he said and did it,) I shall not perplex the reader with conjectures, or attempt exactness in this respect. In general, Matthew is supposed to pay more regard to the order of time in his narration, than Mark, or Luke. John perhaps was more observant of the regular succession, in his history, than any of the other evangelists: but he chiefly recorded those things which had not been mentioned by them.—Matthew, however, seems to fix the date of this miracle to the time immediately following the sermon upon the mount, and whilst Christ was yet surrounded by multitudes. The case of the lepers, and the remarkable laws concerning them, have been considered (*Notes, Lev. xiii. xiv.*) The leprosy seems to have been a disease commonly inflicted by the immediate hand of God, and not curable by medicine: it excluded a man from public ordinances, and from most of the employments and comforts of society; and it was an emblem of the guilt and dominion of sin, which exclude us from communion with God and his people, and, unless removed, must exclude us from heaven. Now, a certain man, who was afflicted with this distressing and disgraceful calamity, heard of Jesus, and believed that he could, and expected that he would, make him clean. Probably he was convinced, by the report of his miracles and doctrine, that he was the Messiah of whom he had read in the books of the prophets: he therefore applied to him in the most humble and reverential manner, falling down before him and worshipping him. Holy men and holy angels used to decline such worship, as an honour by no means to be paid to them; (*Marg. Ref.*) but Christ never intimated his disapprobation of any who rendered it to him; but, on the contrary, he approved of it in the most decisive manner: and this is a proof, that he was conscious that all honour and worship were due to him. Thus approaching the divine Saviour, the leper had a full confidence, that if Jesus pleased, he was able to make him clean, though his leprosy seems to have been inveterate. To cleanse him of this disease implied a total change in the whole mass of the blood, &c. instantaneously produced by a word: but Jesus immediately answered his believing expectation, touching him, and saying, "I will, be thou clean." The touch would have rendered another man ceremonially unclean; but Christ acted as a priest, and more than a priest: and whilst he cleansed

2 iv. 13 ix 1 xi.
 23 Mark ii. 1.
 Luke vii 1
 e xxvii 51 Mark
 xv 39 Luke
 vii 2, &c. Acts
 x. 1, &c. xxii.
 25. xxvii 17 23
 xxvii 1 31 43
 p Job xxxi 13, 14
 Acts x 7. Col.
 ii. 11 ix 1
 1 Tim. vi 2.
 Philem. 16
 q a. 24. ix. 2
 Mark ii 3, &c
 Acts viii. 7 ix
 33.
 r ix 19. Mark y.

5 ¶ And when Jesus was ^e entered in-
to Capernaum, there came unto him ^a a
centurion, beseeching him,
6 And saying, Lord, ^e my servant lieth
at home sick of the ^a palsy, grievously
tormented.

7 And Jesus saith unto him, ^r I will come and heal him.

8 The centurion answered and said.
23, 24. Luke vii. 6.

Lord, * I am not worthy that thou should-
est come under my roof : † but speak
the word only, and my servant shall be
healed.

9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this *man*, ^u Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, ^x Do this, and he doeth *it*.

Luke iv. 35, 36 39 vii 6 ——— x Eph vi 5, 6. Co

the leprosy, he could not contract defilement from it. He then charged him not to inform any man of what had been done : (for it is probable he took him aside from the multitude to cleanse him.) This seems to have been done in order to avoid all appearance of ostentation in his miracles, which could not but be known sufficiently : and perhaps he would not needlessly exasperate his enemies, and excite them to hasten their designs against his life before the appointed time. But that the cure might be authenticated, and, as it were, registered, as well as that honour might be put upon the ordinances of the Mosaic law, which was still in force, Christ ordered the man to go, and show himself to the priest, and offer the appointed sacrifices ; which would bring the priests acquainted with the miraculous cures wrought by him, and might be a testimony to them that he was the promised Messiah.— ‘ Christ, in healing of the leprosy with the touching of his hand, showed that he abhorreth no sinners that come to him, be they never so unclean.’ (Beza.) “ I will, &c.” Here shines forth the divine power of Christ ; that he could do so great things only by his command.— So also Moses says, the world was created by God, saying, “ Let there be light ; and there was light.” (Wolcott’s *genius in Whistly*.)

V. 5-7. A centurion was the captain of a hundred men in the Roman legions; these were not composed of the lowest of the people, but of reputable citizens; and therefore a centurion was considerably higher in rank than a captain in our armies. It is probable this man was of good family and fortune; he was a soldier, educated a heathen, and a Roman; and most of his countrymen and fellow soldiers exceedingly despised the Jews and their religion. Yet his lot being cast by Providence in that part of the Roman empire, (probably without his own choice,) his prejudices had been obviated, he had become acquainted with the Scriptures, and was evidently a humble and spiritual worshipper of the God of Israel, though not a proselyte to the Mosaic law. He had also conceived the highest esteem and liberal affection for the people of God; and, by his good conduct for some considerable time, he had overcome the prejudices of the Jews against him, as a Gentile; and his tender concern about his servant, when sick, should be considered as the effect of his religion, by which he, probably, had won over his domestics also, or some of them, to the worship of God. (*Marg. Ref.*) He had, no doubt, before this heard of the miracles and doctrine of Christ, and perhaps of a similar miracle wrought on the nobleman's son, (*Notes, John iv. 46-54*;) and he had conceived the most exalted ideas of his dignity and excellency, as the promised Messiah and the King of Israel.

So that when his servant, whom he much valued, was seized with a palsy, which not only disabled him from his business, but filled him with extreme pain, he hoped for his cure by a miracle, and applied to Jesus for that purpose.—We learn from St. Luke that he did not come himself, at least not at the first, but that he humbly sent the elders of the Jews, and afterwards his friends: yet some think, that at last he came also himself. Nothing, however, is more common, than for men to be said to do those things, which others do at their instance and in their stead. He, therefore, by the elders of the Jews, addressed Christ in the most respectful manner, and stated his affliction: to which Jesus replied, that he would come and heal his servant immediately; and he set forward without delay.

V. 8, 9. The centurion surprised perhaps at our Lord's condescension, and prompt attention to his request, so contrary to the general spirit and conduct of the Jews; and deeply conscious of his own sinfulness, regarded himself as unworthy to receive a visit from so holy and eminent a person; and considered his house, (the residence of a Gentile,) an improper place for him to enter. When we remember that Christ appeared in all respects as a poor Jew, "who had not where to lay his head;" and that this man was a Roman to whom the Jews were subject, and one that lived in affluence; we shall perceive that his humble reverence of Christ was in every respect extraordinary.—He added, that it was in no wise necessary for Jesus thus to demean himself, for he could remove the disease by a word spoken at a distance. This he illustrated by his own case: he was only an inferior officer, subject to the authority of his tribune and general: yet, having a company of soldiers under his command, he found them prompt to obey his orders, whether delivered on the spot, or sent to them at a distance: and in like manner his servant implicitly obeyed his word: much more then would diseases obey the command of him who was the King of glory and the Lord of all. We can hardly conceive of a higher expression of confidence in the power of Christ, as the Son of God, and as possessed of unlimited authority, than this was.—"If I, who am subject to the power of another, have so much power over my servants, that they instantly do whatever I would have them: how much more shall all things which thou requirest be done at thy command, who art subject to the power of none!" And how can we deny him to be God, in whom shines forth that divine power, which God exerted in the creation of the world; and at whose word all things that he commandeth must be done; and who is subject to the power of none?" (*Woltzogenius in Whitby.*)

y Mark vi. 6.

Luke vi. 9

20 vi. 50

a xxv. vi. Gen.

xxviii. 14

xxviii. 14

10 Ps. xxv. 27

xxviii. 14

20 Act. 23. 24

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10 When Jesus heard *it*, ^y he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily, I say unto you, ^z I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

11 And I say unto you, ^a That many shall come from the east and west, and shall ^b sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, ^c in the kingdom of heaven,

12 But ^d the children of the kingdom shall ^e be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, ^f Go thy way; ^g and as thou hast believed, ^h so be it done unto thee. ⁱ And his servant was healed in the self-same hour.

14 ^j And when Jesus was come ^k into Peter's house, he saw his ^l wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.

15 And he ^m touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, ⁿ and ministered unto them.

16 ^o When ^p the even was come, ^q they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: ^r and he cast out the spirits with ^s his word, ^t and healed all that were sick:

17 That ^u it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, ^v Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

18 ^w Now when Jesus ^x saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart ^y unto the other side.

19 And ^z a certain scribe came, and

k 1 Cor. ix. 5.

l 1 Tim. iii. 2.

m Heb. xiii. 4.

n 1 Cor. xv. 30.

o 2 Kings xiii. 21.

p 1a. vi. 7. Mark

q 1a. Luke vii.

r 54. A. C. xix. 11.

s 13.

t Luke iv. 40. 41.

u John xii. 1-2.

v Mark i. 32-34.

w Luke xli. 42.

x 0. iv. 24. ix. 2.

y Mark ii. 3. Acts

z Ps. xli. 22. Mark i.

a 25-27. 34. v. 3.

b 1c. 15. Acts xix.

c 13-15.

d q. xiv. 14. Ex. xv

e 28.

f 1c. 22. 11. 15. 23.

g 1a. liii. 4. 1 Pet.

h ii. 21.

i t. i. Mark i. 35-

j 36. Luke ix. 42.

k 43. John vi. 15.

l u. xiv. 22. Mark

m 35. v. 21.

n 41. 45. viii. 13.

o Luke viii. 22.

p x. Ezra vii. 6.

q 34. Luke ix. 57. 50. 1 Cor. i. 20.

V. 10-12. ^a Christ, by setting before them the example of the uncircumcised centurion, and yet of an excellent faith, provoketh the Jews to emulation, and forewarneth them of their casting off, and the calling of the Gentiles. (Beza.) Our Lord might have commended many things in the centurion; but he specially showed an entire approbation of his unwavering faith, as one surprised at it, considering all this Gentile's disadvantages. Thus he emphatically instructed the people, that he best approved of those who formed the most exalted apprehensions of him, and expected the most from him; and that they could not honour him more than was right, and due to him. He declared, that he had not found such strong faith even in Israel, where most might have been expected; no, not so much as among his own disciples! and hence he took occasion to declare, that numbers of the benighted Gentiles, from the distant parts of the earth, would by faith in him become fellow heirs with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of that heavenly felicity, to the enjoyment of which they had attained; whilst the Jews, the children of the kingdom, that had so long enjoyed the peculiar privileges of God's people, to whom the Gospel was first to be preached, and who supposed themselves exclusively entitled to the blessings of Messiah's kingdom, would be excluded from the Church, and left in a dark and wretched condition; and that numbers of them would be shut out of heaven, and left to final wickedness, misery, and despair; where they would in vain weep, and gnash their teeth in rage and anguish, recollecting what happiness they had lost, and what ruin they had incurred, by their unbelief and folly. The future state must exclusively be meant. ^b It cannot be said, with any propriety, ^c either that the holy patriarchs share with Christians in the present privileges of the gospel-state, or that the Jews weep and wail on account of their being excluded from them. (Doddridge.)

V. 13. Our Lord, having made the preceding observations on the case, said to the centurion, who by this time had joined the company, ^d Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And accord-

ingly it was found, that the servant was perfectly cured at the time when he spake these words.

V. 14, 15. This miracle was wrought on the sabbath-day, after our Lord and his disciples returned from the synagogue, (Marg. Ref.) and, as it is generally supposed, some time before the healing of the centurion's servant.—It seems that Peter and his brother Andrew had a house at Capernaum; that Peter's wife's mother was one of the family; and that our Lord lodged there, when in that city. In his absence, she had been seized with a violent fever, which confined her to her bed; but on his return, he went to her, and rebuked the fever, (as a man would do his servant, that was going beyond his orders,) and it immediately obeyed his word and left her: and she was able without delay to arise, and wait upon him and his disciples, being at once perfectly restored to full health and strength!

V. 16, 17. (Marg. Ref.) The Jews began their sabbaths in the evening at sun-set, and ended them at the same time the next day. The people were restrained by regard to the sabbath from bringing their sick and demoniacs, till that was over: but the miracles which Christ had wrought, being noised abroad, might induce them thus to throng to him in the evening; and Jesus, not complaining of weariness from the labours of the day, or of the unseasonableness of the hour, restored all the demoniacs to the perfect use of their faculties, and to mental composure; as well as healed all their sick persons. Thus the prophecy of *Isaiah*, (liii. 4.) was fulfilled: for though the prophet more directly predicted his sufferings on the cross for our sins, yet all the labours, fatigues, and sorrows of his whole life, were willingly submitted to, out of compassion to sinners, and formed a part of his humiliation as our Surety; sickness, and the power of the devil, are effects of sin; and he suffered, to deliver us from sin and all its consequences. So, that, in thus denying himself, that he might relieve demoniacs and sick persons, for the confirmation of his Gospel, he might truly be said "to take our infirmities and bear our sicknesses;" that is, to endure pain and uneasiness himself, in order to relieve others from them.

7 Luke xiv. 23—
27 33 xxii. 31,
34 John xiii. 36
—38.
7 Ps. lxxviii. 3.
civ. 17.
a Ps. xl. 17 lxxix
22. cix. 22.
b Luke
lii. 2. 3. Luke
li. 12. 16 viii.
2. 2 Cor. vii. 9.
c Luke ix. 59—62.
c xix. 29. Lev.
xxi. 11. 12
Num. xli. 6. 7.
Deut. xxxii. 9.
10. 1 Kings xix.
20. 21. Hag. i.
2. 2 Cor. v. 10.
d iv. 18—22 ix.
9. John i. 43.
e Luke xv. 32.
f Eph. ii. 1. 5.
1 Tim. v. 6.
g ix. 1. Mark ix.
35 Luke viii. 22.
h Ps. cvii. 23—27.
i Is. liv. 11. Jon.
1. 4. 5. Mark iv. 37, 38 Acts xxvii. 14, &c. 2 Cor. xi. 25, 16.

said unto him, Master, ^a I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.
20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, ^a and the birds of the air have nests; but ^a the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

21 And ^b another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, ^c suffer me first to go and bury my father.

22 But Jesus said unto him, ^d Follow me; ^e and let the dead bury their dead.

23 ¶ And when he was ^f entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

24 And, behold, ^g there arose a great

tempest in the sea, inasmuch that the ship was covered with the waves: ^b but he was asleep.

25 And his disciples came to him, ⁱ and awoke him, saying, Lord, ^k save us: we perish.

26 And he saith unto them, ^l Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, ^m and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

27 But the men ⁿ marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?

V. 18—20. The evangelists Mark and Luke record this and what follows in another connexion. (*Marg. Ref.*) When, however, great multitudes were gathered about Jesus, and it might have been supposed that he would have instructed them, he either perceived that they were indisposed to profit, and that he had taught them as much as they could at that time receive and digest; or he meant to put their sincerity to the trial, and to procure leisure for necessary relaxation: and therefore he gave orders to his disciples to cross the sea of Tiberias. In the mean while a scribe, or interpreter of the law and the traditions, (*Marg. Ref.*) came to him, offering to become his constant follower. He seems to have been convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, and to have admired his discourses, and, having imbibed some confused ideas of his dignity and authority, he probably built his hopes of future preferment and consequence on joining him at so early a period;—perhaps expecting that Christ would have gladly acceded to his proposal, seeing he was as yet only followed by unlearned fishermen, and others of low rank in life. But our Lord saw that he was actuated by ambition and carnal motives, and that he had not counted his cost; he therefore discouraged his proposal, intimating that it would not answer his expectations; for though the meanest of the wild beasts and birds of the air had their abode, to which they retired for repose and safety, yet he, the Son of man, during his humiliation in human nature, had not where to lay his head, even when wearied with labour, and needing the refreshment of sleep. His disciples therefore must expect to be equally destitute, to endure hardship, and to be recompensed only by spiritual advantages. Probably, this sufficed, and induced the scribe to abandon his design.

V. 21, 22. Another person also, who had followed Christ as his disciple, was called to a more constant attendance on him, that he might be sent forth to preach his Gospel: but for the present he desired to excuse himself, requesting leave to attend on the funeral of his father, who was just deceased; for Christ's answer seems to imply that this was his request, and not that he might stay with an aged parent till his death, as some explain it. But our Lord perceived that he had some reluctance to the self-denying service appointed for him, which might have been increased by going to bury his father; and at the same time he purposed to show, that all personal and relative concerns

must give place to his command, and our attachment to him and his cause. He therefore did not grant his request, but ordered him to leave that care to his relatives, who were dead in sin, and incapable of spiritual services, but could order every thing needful for the burial of the dead, and would give due attention to it. *'The dead, in Scripture, often signify—those, who in a spiritual sense are so, by being "alienated from the life of God," and "dead in trespasses and sins."* Here then Christ teacheth, that when we are called by him to the promotion of the Gospel, and the salvation of men's souls, we must not suffer earthly business, which may be done as well by others, who are unfit to be employed in spirituals, to give us the least hindrance from setting instantly upon that work. (*Whitby.*)

V. 23—27. Christ, having entered the ship, or boat, which the disciples had provided, set sail, being accompanied by some other small vessels; (*Marg. Ref.*) but instead of the fair voyage, which probably they expected, they were overtaken with a terrible storm; so that the ship was speedily covered with the waves, and apparently ready to sink; yet amidst all this confusion and distress, Jesus lay fast asleep. His human nature, like to ours in every thing but sin, was wearied with incessant fatigue; and he willingly yielded to sleep, foreseeing the storm, that his power might thus be more noticed. But the disciples, trembling lest they should be swallowed up by the waves, and having no resource but in his power, came and awoke him; saying, "Lord, save us, we perish." Considering all that they had heard and seen of his power, this was only weak faith; and their fears were evidences of much remaining unbelief. It was impossible that the vessel which carried him could sink; and in his divine nature he was as able to restrain the winds and waves, when his human nature lay asleep, as to cure the paralytic by a word spoken at a distance. Having, therefore, first rebuked them as men of little faith, he next, with the authority of the Lord and Governor of the creation, rebuked the winds and waves, (as a master would rebuke a company of unruly servants;) and at his omnipotent word, the winds suddenly ceased to blow, the tempestuous sea, (contrary to its nature,) immediately became smooth, and a great calm succeeded. This filled the disciples with the greatest astonishment; and they said to each other, "What manner

o Mark v. 1, &c.
 Luke vii. 26.
 &c. Acts x. 38
 p. Gen. 16. xx.
 Deut. vii.
 1.
 q. Mark v. 2-5.
 Luke viii. 27.
 29.
 r. Judg. v. 6.
 s. 2 Sam. xvi. 10.
 xix. 52. Joel iii.
 4. Mark i. 24. v.
 7. Luke iv. 34.
 viii. 29. John ii.
 4.
 t. iv. 3. Mark iii.
 11. Luke iv. 41.
 Acts xvi. 17.
 Jam. ii. 19.
 2. Pet. ii. 4. Jude
 6.

28 ¶ And ° when he was come to the other side, into the country of the ^o Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, ^q coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, ^r so that no man might pass by that way.

29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, ^s thou Son of God? art thou come hither to ^t torment us before the time?

30 And there was a good way off

from them ^x an herd of many swine, feeding.

31 So ^y the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

32 And he said unto them, ^z Go: and when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, ^a the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

x. Lev. xi. 7.
 Deut. x. 1. &c.
 Ixx. 4. lxxi. 3.
 Mark v. 11.
 Luke viii. 32.
 xv. 12, 16.
 y. Mark v. 7. 12.
 Luke viii. 30-
 33 Rev. xii. 12.
 xx. 1. 2.
 z. 1 Kings xxii. 22.
 Job i. 10-12.
 ii. 5-6. Acts ii.
 23. iv. 28. Rev.
 xx. 7.
 a. Job i. 19-19. ii.
 7. 5. Mark v. 13.
 Luke viii. 33

“of Person is this?” No doubt he is more than man; for, with divine “authority, he commands even the winds, “and waves, and they obey him?” Thus the tempest, which threatened their destruction, was over-ruled, to the increase of their faith, and admiration of the majesty and power of their Lord. (*Marg. Ref.*) “It being so often ^q made the property of God, to still the raging of the sea, —it is not to be wondered at, that Christ’s disciples ^r should conceive there must be a divine power in him, ^s who could perform such things.” (*Whitby.*)

V. 28, 29. The country of the Gergesenes included in it the region of Gadara. (*Marg. Ref.*) It seems to have been inhabited by Jews, but surrounded by Gentiles, who mixed much with the inhabitants. The other evangelists on this occasion mention but one demoniac; probably, because one was more remarkable than the other, both before and after his cure; but they do not say that there was no more than one: this therefore is no real disagreement. The circumstances of this narration, (like those of several others,) plainly prove the reality of possessions by evil spirits; for such things were said and done by these demoniacs, and in consequence of their cure, as one would think no man could ascribe to lunacy, who was himself in his sober senses. But a main point of modern Sadduceism consists in denying the existence or agency of apostate spirits; and they carry on their designs best in the dark, and maintain their empire by promoting this kind of infidelity. Some, however, who are not skeptical in other respects, are unwilling to admit the reality of these possessions. But it cannot be thought, that Satan and his angels want power or malice to distract men’s minds, and torment their bodies, as well as to tempt them to sin, if God be pleased to permit them; nor can it be ascertained how far they have influence in producing or increasing diseases, which affect both body and mind. Even if they do not in any instance immediately cause lunacies, or other maladies, it cannot be denied, upon Scriptural principles, that they may take the advantage of the disordered state of the body, to disturb and terrify the mind, and to augment the effects. But when Christ was manifested, to destroy the works of the devil, there was a peculiar propriety and wisdom, in leaving that great enemy of God and man at greater liberty; that he might show his power and malice, and the tendency of his efforts to render mankind miserable, and to destroy them; and that Christ might have the fuller opportunity to show his superior power and authority; to give conclusive evidence of the existence of these spirits, in opposition to the infidelity of the Sadducees; and to evince

the beneficent intention of his Gospel. “Some are of opinion, that these were only persons afflicted with strange diseases; but this cavil may be evidently confuted. The Scriptures make a plain and evident distinction betwixt curing diseases, and casting out devils. (iv. 24.) This will be further evident from many circumstances, relating to the devils being cast out. (Mark i. 34. Luke iv. 41. viii. 27. 33.) Now to make all these sayings the effects of a disease, or to conceive that Christ spake thus to a disease, is too great an evidence of one that is himself diseased. Christ sometimes puts questions to these demons, asking their names, &c. The demoniacs were of such strength, that no chain or fetters could bind them. The diseased persons could not fear being destroyed, tormented, sent out of the country, or into the abyss, by Christ.” (*Whitby.*) Some persons argue, as if the Evangelists wrote under the influence of Jewish prejudices; nay, as if our Lord spake and acted, on these occasions, out of some regard to them. But this argument is suited entirely to subvert the authority of the inspired writers, and most awfully reflects on the conduct of Christ. Where Jewish opinions were the effect of error and prejudice, he never failed most decidedly to oppose and counteract them. (*Note, Acts xvi. 16—18.*) Having premised these remarks, the exceeding fierceness of these demoniacs calls for attention; for they could not be confined, but wandered in the tombs, or solitary places, without the cities and villages, and were the terror of the country, so that “no man could pass by that way.” Yet when they saw Christ, the evil spirits knew and dreaded him; and, using the men’s organs of speech, (as Satan of old spake by the serpent,) they cried out aloud, “What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?” They expected no benefit from him, they declined all contest with him, they desired to have nothing to do with him. “O thou Jesus, the Son of the ever-living God, it is our great misery, that we are fallen into thy hands. What wilt thou now do with us? Dost thou mean now to accomplish our full torture before the day of judgment?” (*Bp. Hall.*) Thus owning, that their doom was fixed, but desiring longer respite, and liberty for mischief.

V. 30—32. Swine were unclean animals by the Mosaic law, and the very touch of them defiled a man; yet the Gadarenes fed them in great numbers, to sell to their Gentile neighbours. The evil spirits, therefore, being reluctant to quit a region where their influence had been so entire, formed a subtle plan of prejudicing the inhabitants

b. Mark v. 16-16.
Luke viii. 34-36.
Acts xix. 16-17.

33 And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.

against Jesus, that they might be induced to reject his instructions. A ware of the value they put upon the swine, because of their gains, they requested permission to possess those animals; and he, probably to punish the avarice of the Gadarenes, to give a decisive proof of the reality of possessions, and to show the destructive rage and power of evil spirits, as well as the limits assigned to their influence, permitted them. Immediately therefore they impelled the swine to such fury, that the whole herd rushed from a precipice into the sea, and was drowned. It is surprising, that any should have thought this permission either a ground of objection against our Lord's conduct, or requiring a laboured vindication. Had not his almighty power restrained the evil spirits, they would have destroyed, not only the demoniacs, but also the guilty owners and feeders of the swine; so that his mercy, in only permitting the destruction of that property, which the Gadarenes kept from avarice alone, and by constantly violating the law, and yet protecting their persons, was truly wonderful and adorable. But the objection reminds us of one most important fact, viz. that the enemies of Christianity always throw the blame on our holy and beneficent religion, of all the mischief, which the devil and wicked men have taken occasion from it to perpetrate; forgetting that they would have done vastly more mischief, had its restraints been removed. If, however, *permitting* be not clearly distinguished from *commanding*, or *causing*, it will be impossible to avoid imputing to the just and holy God the sins of all his rebellious creatures, which is the most detestable blasphemy that can be conceived. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 33, 34. It must be supposed, that the keepers were exceedingly affrighted, as well as astonished, at this strange event; and they reporting it in the city Gadara, the inhabitants in general came to Jesus; yet not to receive instruction, or implore protection, or crave miraculous assistance. Probably, their guilty consciences made them dread his power; and the loss of the swine no doubt ^{highly} displeased them; but, not venturing to attempt violence against so extraordinary a person, they presented one single request to him, namely, "that he would depart out of their coasts;" which was in fact to say, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?" and proved them to be under the power of Satan, as much as the demoniacs had been, but in another and more criminal sense. 'Where men live like swine, there doth not Christ tarry, but devils.' (*Beza.*) (*Notes, Mark v. 1-20, Luke viii. 22-39.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-4.

The various diseases of our bodies, which entered by sin, and end in death, are faint emblems of those which disorder our souls, and must issue in final misery, unless cured by the heavenly Physician. But men feel, and desire deliverance from, sickness; and willingly incur expense

34 And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they brought him that he would depart out of their coasts.

c. 23. Daut v. 26.
1 John. xxi. 4
1 Kings. xxi. 17.
John xxi. 12.
Mark v. 17.
Luke viii. 28.
17-39.
Acts xxi. 39.

and use unpleasant means to obtain it; while few are sensible of their misery as sinners, or bestow proper pains to obtain a cure! Were the divine Saviour to return to the earth, and renew his beneficent miracles, he would again be surrounded with multitudes, earnestly beseeching him to relieve their pains and heal their diseases; but he is ever present with us, ready to save us from sin, and to make us holy and happy: yet, alas! few are willing to come to him for it, though he confers his benefits without money or price, never refuses aid to any that ask it, and effectually heals all who wait upon him! These are blessed afflictions, that bring us acquainted with Christ, and cause us to seek salvation from him. If we have discovered that we are polluted with spiritual leprosy, and are humbled on that account, we need not fear, in seeking to Christ to cleanse us, however inveterate our maladies have become. He did not take our nature upon him on purpose to cleanse leprous bodies, but leprous souls; we need not then say, "If thou wilt," &c.; for we may as fully rely on his willingness as on his power. Let us then wait on him with humble supplications, confessing how vile and miserable we are, and adoring his power and grace: in due time he will speak the word, "I will, be thou clean," and the effect will as surely follow, as when he said "Let there be light, and there was light." Nor should we now conceal our obligations to his cleansing power; but rather proclaim them to his glory, that other lepers may hear and apply to him also. We should rather copy the example of his humility, and learn to do good to the mean and to the wretched, without ostentation. But if men would honour and obey their Benefactor, they must attend on all the ordinances of God: when, in the judgment of faithful ministers, they are indeed cleansed from the guilt and dominion of their sins, they should at the Lord's table offer their spiritual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and join themselves to his people; and this will turn to a testimony, for the instruction of their neighbours also.

V. 5-13.

Eminent examples of faith and piety are sometimes met with, where least to be expected; and when those who have religious advantages, and even the ministers of religion, turn away from Christ, soldiers, and others, whose education and mode of life cast them at an apparent distance from the Gospel, embrace and adorn it! In this the sovereignty of grace is displayed; and often those removals, to which men are most reluctant, or which have been most casual, or made from secular motives, are overruled by Providence, to bring them acquainted with the word and people of God! Where true religion governs the heart, it regulates the life, and renders men exemplary in relative duties; and thus it promotes domestic comfort, whilst it glorifies God and saves the soul. Pious, faithful, and affectionate servants are great and important blessings from the Lord, and ought to be very dear to us; and

CHAP. IX.

Jesus, returning to Capernaum, 1, heals one sick of the palsy, 2—8; calls Matthew from the receipt of custom, 9; justifies himself for eating with publicans and sinners, 10—13; and his disciples for not

fasting, like the Pharisees, 14—17; is entreated by a ruler to heal his daughter, 18, 19; heals a woman of an inveterate issue of blood, 20—22; raises the ruler's daughter, 23—26; gives sight to two blind men, 27—31; and casts a devil out of a dumb man, 32.

surely, if we have the benefit of their service when in health, we should not desert them in their sickness, or neglect to procure for them all the relief and solace in our power.—True piety is always connected with deep humility: the more we know of God, and his law and truth, the more we examine our hearts and lives, according to this rule; and the more we commune with God, and are sensible of our obligations to him, the deeper will be our self-abasement, and the more unreservedly shall we sit down in the lowest place, and subscribe even to those degrading opinions which others have formed of us, perhaps out of prejudice and mistake. But if we proportionably know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall not be discouraged, for we shall perceive that he is ever ready to help the most unworthy. He is “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever:” he is still ready to hear all our petitions: and though we are unworthy that he should come under our roof, or dwell in our hearts, yet he will come at our desire, and bring salvation with him. At his potent word, the strongest evil habits or propensities are subdued, as palsies and fevers were of old; and then strength, liberty, victory, peace, and holiness, succeed. The more we honour his power and grace, the greater tokens of his approbation and favour shall we receive; and the answer of our prayers will generally bear proportion to the degree of our genuine faith.—What cause have we, in these distant western regions, to rejoice that we are called, by his Gospel, to enter into his family, to walk with him, and ere long to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven! But let us also remember, that we now are “the children of the kingdom:” let us take warning by the example of the benighted, wretched Jews: “let us not be high-minded, but fear,” lest any of us should fall from our height of privilege through unbelief, and be cast into that “outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth:” whilst the Lord shall replenish his Church by the conversion of the heathen, or that of the most abject sinners in our communities.

V. 14—22.

They, who are confined from public ordinances by sickness, or any other real hindrance, and to whom it is an affliction, may expect the Saviour's gracious presence with them in retirement, and that he will soothe their sorrows, and abate their pains. When our maladies are cured, even by ordinary methods, we should arise and minister to Christ and his people; giving him praise as our Healer, and dedicating our health and strength to his service: and when he rebukes and removes the fever of our sinful passions, we shall delight in doing his will. He never deems any hour unseasonable, at which we come to him, to deliver us from temptation or trouble; nor should

we excuse ourselves from helping others, because it is late, or we are fatigued, when the case is urgent, and the opportunity favourable.—Whilst we rejoice in the salvation of Christ, let us remember the pain, labour, and sufferings, which he endured, when “himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses” and sins, that we may not grudge labour, trouble, and expense, in doing good to others. But let us contrast the divine majesty and glory of our Redeemer with the external poverty and destitute condition, to which he voluntarily submitted. Was he weary, and without a place where he might recline his sacred head? Was he even more destitute than the foxes, or the birds of the air? And shall we absurdly aim to render his religion subservient to our secular interests and preferences? and to preach or profess the Gospel in order to grow rich or great? Shall we deem honour, excellence, or happiness, connected with affluence, splendour, and indulgence? Shall we pay court to the wealthy *because of their wealth*, or despise the poor *on account of their poverty*? Shall we seek great things for ourselves, or be discontented with mean accommodations, though far better than our Saviour's? God forbid! His disciples must not only profess a readiness to follow him whithersoever he goeth, but they must be ready to accompany him, by sea and land, through storms and tempests, through poverty, hardship, reproach, and persecution; or they will never hold out to the end. If he requires our service, even the most endeared relative affections, and such things as would otherwise have been our duty, must give place. Enough will be found to attend on other employments, and to take care of the ordinary affairs of families and communities: but he, who is called to follow Christ, and preach his Gospel, must leave “the dead to bury their dead,” and not allow secular concerns to take him off from his high and important work.

V. 23—27.

Even when following Christ in the path of duty, we may expect to meet with tribulations, nay, to be menaced with impending destruction. Satan will then, especially, endeavour to obstruct our course, or dismay our souls, by raising some tremendous storm; and the Lord may see good to permit him, for our humiliation and the trial of our faith. But though the Saviour seems to sleep, and disregard his Church and the believer, when conflicting with the winds and waves of temptation or persecution, and apparently ready to be overwhelmed, yet his presence infallibly secures their safety; and he only means to excite their more earnest prayers for deliverance, and their more simple and entire dependence on him for it. Even weak faith will induce us to cry out, “Lord, save us, we perish:” but our terrors, in danger comparatively small, often prove our faith to be little, which at other times had

a vii. 6. viii. 19.
 23. Mark v. 21.
 Luke viii. 37.
 New. xxi. 11.
 b. vi. 13.
 c. vi. 24. viii. 16.
 Mark i. 32. ii. 11.
 18. 19. Acts v.
 15. 16. xix. 12.
 d. vii. 10. Mark ii.
 4. 5. Luke v.
 19. 20. John v.
 23. Acts xiv. 9.
 Jan. ii. 19.
 c. 22. Mark v. 34.
 John xxi. 5.
 f. ix. xxii. 1. x.
 1. 2. xiv. 23.
 g. xxi. 33.
 34. Luke v. 20.
 vii. 47-50. Acts
 xiii. 38. 39.
 Rom. ix. 6-10.
 v. 11. Col. i. 12.
 —14.
 p. vi. 28. Mark ii.
 6. 7. vii. 21.
 Luke v. 21. vii.
 39. 40.
 h. xxv. 65. Lev.
 xxiv. 16. Mark
 xiv. 61. John x.
 33-36. Acts vi. 11-13.

The people wonder, but the Pharisees ascribe it to the prince of the devils, 33, 34. Jesus compassionates and preaches to the multitudes; and charges his disciples to pray, that labourers might be sent forth into the harvest, 35—38.

AND ^a he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into ^b his own city. **2** And, behold, ^c they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus ^d seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy; ^e Son, ^f be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

3 And, behold, ^g certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.

seemed to be strong; nay, Christ often accounts that little faith, of which we had a far higher opinion. He will not leave the weak believer to perish; but he will rebuke him for his unbelieving fears; and show his disapprobation of his conduct, when he dishonours him by distrusting his truth and love; and he leads men into perilous circumstances, both to detect the weakness of their faith, and the greatness of his power, whom winds and waves, and all creatures, implicitly obey.

V. 23—34.

The power and malice of apostate angels might justly alarm and dismay us, were it not for the superior power and grace of our Redeemer. We bar our doors with great care against a few ruffians of our own species; but we seldom reflect that there are legions of devils, which have constant access to us, against whose assaults we have no method of defence; and whilst they are able, if permitted, to distract our minds, disorder, torment, or kill our bodies, or destroy our possessions, their only delight is in misery and destruction. In what an awful situation then are they, who, by daily listening to their temptations, provoke God to give them up to their power and malice! And what cause have we for gratitude, for being preserved during the unconverted part of our lives! But the believer in the path of duty needs not fear these roaring lions and wolves, being safe under the watchful care of the almighty Shepherd. They cannot break that hedge of protection, which is placed about his people; nay, they cannot enter a swine without his leave. They can tempt sinners to destroy themselves, yet they have no power to destroy them. Spiritual possession by these unclean spirits is, however, most to be dreaded: their influence tends to make men miserable and mischievous, the burden of their families, and the nuisance or terror of society. Under their fascinating delusions the poor sinner imagines that religion can only make him uneasy; and if he have some notions of the truth, and suppose "Jesus to be the Son of God," nay, if he have any dread of future torment; he will yet have nothing to do with the Saviour, but shuns the Gospel.

4 And Jesus ^a knowing their thoughts said, ^b Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

5 For ^c whether is easier, to say, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*; or to say, ^d Arise, and walk?

6 But that ye may know, ^a that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) ^b Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.

7 And he arose, and departed to his house.

8 But ^a when the multitude saw *it*, they marvelled, ^b and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

Eph. iv. 32. Col. iii. 13. — c. 5. Luke xxi. 11-13. Acts ix. 24. — d. 1. Mark ii. 12. vii. 37. Luke v. 28. vi. 16. — q. xv. 31. Luke v. 25. xvii. 15. xiii. 47. Acts iv. 21.

"lest it should torment him before the time." But Jesus gives deliverance to such wretched slaves, and makes them willing to be his servants, whenever he sees good, notwithstanding all the opposition of the powers of darkness. — Even devils believe, and tremble; nay, they can become supplicants to Christ, to be exempted from torments, or permitted to do mischief! Let none then trust in notions, dead faith, or selfish prayers; or in any thing short of "faith that worketh by love." There is nothing so base and filthy, that men will not do for money, and nothing more prejudices the mind against the Gospel, than its interference with the pursuit of riches by unlawful means. The covetous prove that they are possessed by Satan, and enemies to Christ, equally with the most abandoned predators or debauchees. Nay, perhaps confirmed avarice is more rarely cured than any other distemper of the soul. All that such men hear of the power and grace of Christ only excites fears and anxiety about their ungodly gain: they want to rid the country of him and his ministers, that they may possess and increase their wealth without fear of consequences: and they copy the example of the Gadarenes, who loved their swine better than the Saviour, or their own souls. From such possession and insanity, good Lord deliver us!

NOTES.

CHAP. IX. V. 1. This verse should have been joined to the end of the foregoing chapter; for it seems evident that the subsequent miracle was wrought some time before Christ's voyage to Gadara. Capernaum, not Nazareth, was at this time our Lord's own city. (*Marg. Ref.*) Bethlehem brought him forth, Nazareth brought him up, and Capernaum was his dwelling place.

V. 2—3. (*Notes, Mark ii. 1—12. Luke v. 18—26.*) This miracle is much more fully recorded by the other evangelists; and the more particular consideration of it is therefore postponed. St. Mark records several miracles more circumstantially than Matthew does; from which it is evident that he did not extract his Gospel from Matthew, as some have supposed. The latter seems in this place to record several miracles, wrought at different times, in one

9 ¶ And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man ^r named Matthew, ^r sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, ^s Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

10 And it came to pass, ^a as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, ^u many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.

11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, ^y Why

eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?

12 But when Jesus heard *that*, he said unto them, ^z They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

13 But ^a go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, ^b I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come ^c to call the righteous, ^d but sinners to repentance.

continued narration; as in other places he relates many parables, without mentioning any of the miracles which our Lord wrought at the same time.

Son, be, &c. 'Son is a title of condescension and tenderness, by which superiors addressed their inferiors.' (Doddridge.) (Marg. Ref.) 'Thou art come hither, in desire and confidence of cure; I will give thee more than thou askest, a happy restitution to a good estate of soul; thy palsy is healed, thy sins, (the cause of it,) are forgiven thee.' (Bp. Hall.) Some think that our Lord remitted only the temporal punishment of this man's sins; and the chief argument which they use, in confirmation of this opinion, is, that the apostles cured diseases; so that this could be no proof of authority to forgive sins, as to the eternal punishment. But the apostles healed diseases in the name of Christ; and they forgave sins by the authority of Christ: (xvi. 19. John xx. 23:) and he did both, in his own name and by his own authority. If the *palsy* was the temporal punishment of this man's sin, the healing of it alone was the remission of that punishment; and the authoritative language, which offended the Pharisees, was superfluous. But if sin, in every sense, was forgiven to the paralytic, as a true believer, his cure sealed that pardon, and gave him the comfort of it; and proved the most important point in contest between Christ and the scribes; namely, that he was the Son of God; and that even as the Son of man, in his deepest humiliation, all judgment was committed to him, and he was authorized to pardon and save any sinner, in the summary manner, in which he pardoned and saved the thief upon the cross. 'By remitting the sin, he manifestly showed who he was: for if none can remit sins but God, and yet our Lord did remit them and cure the man, it is manifest, that he was both the Word of God and the Son of man, receiving power of remission of sins from his Father, as God and Man.' (Irenæus.) 'The Jews here say, that it was proper to God to forgive sins: and this Christ denies not; but only proves that the Son of man had this power also, leaving them to make the inference.' (Whitby.)

V. 9. (Marg. Ref.) Matthew here gives an account of the manner in which he was called to follow Christ. He was also called Levi; it being common for men to be known by more names than one: and, probably, Matthew was his name when a publican, for he always calls himself by it; and Levi, that given him by way of honourable distinction, when he became a follower of Christ, for the other evangelists generally call him so. Thus Saul, when

he became an apostle, was named Paul. Matthew was originally a publican, or a collector of the taxes and customs. These were generally farmed out to the best bidder by public sale; and they who hired the revenues of a large district, were used to let them out in subdivisions to inferior publicans, who were assisted by the Roman soldiery in collecting them. The Jews were very averse to the Roman government, out of mistaken principles of conscience, as well as from love to independence; and they generally deemed it very criminal for their countrymen to follow this employment; so that nothing but the love of gain could induce them to engage in it. In general, they were men of bad moral characters; and many of them increased the odium against the order, by exacting more than their due, and enforcing their demands by military violence. The office therefore rendered a man infamous; though they were not all so avaricious and iniquitous as this seemed to imply. Matthew was of this ensnaring and disgraceful occupation; and was sitting in his office, receiving the taxes and customs imposed on goods that were landed and embarked, when Jesus spoke to him. His hands were full of business, perhaps his head of calculations, and his heart of covetousness: for it is not certain that he had previously paid any regard to the doctrine of Christ. But when our Lord commanded him to follow him, such a power accompanied the word, as influenced him to renounce immediately his lucrative employment, and to become his constant attendant, that he might be made a preacher of the Gospel. So that he arose without delay, and, leaving his business to his partners, or assistants, he went after Jesus, and never returned to his former occupation.

V. 10-13. When Matthew had finally settled his concerns, (this at least is most probable,) he made an entertainment, to which he invited Jesus and his disciples, and a number of the publicans, and others of his former acquaintance. This he seems to have done, in hopes that they too might derive benefit from our Lord's discourse; and accordingly Christ without hesitation sat down to table with the company. But the Pharisees, who were constantly watching for some objection against him, inquired of his disciples, why their Master acted so inconsistently with his character as a prophet, as to sit at meat with men of such vile characters? But he justified his conduct by an apt similitude. Persons in health have no occasion for a physician: but the sick are glad of his advice, and willing to follow his prescriptions; and it is his proper business to go amongst them, though their disease may render their

Exl. p. John iii.
29. iv. 1.
f. vi. xi. 18, 19.
Prov. xx. 6.
Mark ii. 18-22.
Luk. p. 13-19.
xviii. 9-12.

14 ¶ Then came to him ^a the disciples of John, saying, ' Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?

Exl. p. 1-10.
John xiv. 17.
K. ix. xv. 14.
L. xviii. 24.
Rev. xiii. 2.
Luk. xxi. 19-23.
22. Acts i. 6.

15 And Jesus said unto them, ^a Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, ^b when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, ^c and then shall they fast.

2 Acts xiii. 1-3.
xix. 23. ^a Cor. vi. 3.
vii. 3. 2 Cor. xi. 2.
* Or, rare, or, unworned cloth.
Egen. xxviii. 1.
f. vi. xi. 18, 19.
xi. 11. John xxi. 12. 1 Cor. iii. 1.
2. xiii. 14.
1 John i. 4. Job xxviii. 19. Ps. xxix. 13.

16 No man putteth a piece of ^a new cloth unto an old garment; ^b for that which is put in to fill it up, taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.

17 Neither do men put new wine into ^a old bottles; else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

company unpleasant. Thus none but humble sinners know how to value a Saviour, or profit by his help. They who suppose their souls to be in health, do not welcome the spiritual Physician; his attendance would be thrown away, and be irksome to them. This was the case of the Pharisees: they despised Christ, because they were whole in their own estimation: but the poor publicans and sinners evidently wanted instruction and amendment, and his compassion led him to go among them as a physician, to bring health and cure to their souls. But let the objectors go and learn the meaning of the passage in their Scriptures, which taught them, that God preferred acts of mercy to their brethren, even to the external worship prescribed in the law. (Note, Hos. vi. 6.) Indeed, he did not come into the world to call the *righteous* to share the privileges of his kingdom: if any were truly righteous *of themselves*, they would not want his salvation; and they, who proudly thought themselves to be so, would not accept of it. But he came to call sinners to participate the blessings of his kingdom: not by encouraging them in sin, but by exhorting, encouraging, and inducing them to repent, and forsake it.

V. 14, 15. (Marg. Ref.) John was at this time in prison; and his afflicted circumstances, as well as his mortified character and the nature of his introductory dispensation, led those who were peculiarly attached to him, and not willing to become Christ's disciples, to keep frequent and strict fasts: and when they saw Jesus and his followers occasionally go to feasts, (though they seem in general to have lived in a very spare and frugal manner,) they concluded that they never fasted. They therefore inquired of Jesus, why his disciples neglected this part of strict religion, as they supposed it to be? But he, referring them to John's testimony of him, as the Bridegroom of the Church, reminded them, that such austerities would be unsuitable to the present circumstances. It would be unreasonable for the companions of a bridegroom to fast, during the days allotted for the nuptials, which were

18 ¶ While he spake these things unto them, ^a behold, there came a certain ^b ruler, and ^c worshipped him, saying, ' My daughter is even now dead: but ^d come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

19 And Jesus ^a arose and followed him, and so *did* his disciples.

20 (And, ^a behold, a woman, which was diseased with ^b an issue of blood twelve years, came behind *him*, and ^c touched the ^d hem of his garment:

21 For she said within herself, ^a If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

22 But Jesus turned him about; and when he saw her, he said, ^a Daughter, be of good comfort; ^b thy faith hath made thee whole.

usually spent in festivity; but if any calamity tore him from them, their joy would be turned into mourning, and their feast into fasting. In like manner, it would be improper for his disciples to fast, whilst they had the comfort of his presence; but he should soon be taken from them by his crucifixion, and at length by his ascension; and then they would meet with hardships and trials that would render fasting seasonable, nor would they fail to join it with their other religious exercises.

V. 16, 17. Our Lord here referred to some rules of prudence among men. It was not usual to take a piece of woollen cloth, that had never been scoured or prepared, to join to an old garment; because its rough and unpliant sides would not suit the soft old cloth, but would rather tear it further, and make the rent worse. Nor was it usual for men to put new wine into old *leathern* bottles, which were going to decay; for in this case the bottles would burst, through the fermenting of the wine, and so both be wasted: whereas by putting the new wine into strong new bottles, both might be preserved. Thus, in those occasional duties, which were not essential to religion, but rather helps to things excellent, discretion should be used, and a proportion observed between the degree of a man's knowledge, experience, and stability, and the self-denial required of him; otherwise they may tend to discouragement, or to fatal mistakes. Hopeful persons might be disheartened by premature impositions; or led to rest in them, and make a self-righteousness of them, and thus become more fatally deluded than ever. So that great caution, prudence, and tenderness, were requisite, in dealing with young converts about such matters, as, though useful, were not indispensable; that their former habits and sentiments might not be too violently and hastily crossed, and that they might not receive forbidding ideas of the service of their gracious Lord: but opportunities should be waited for, and duties of this kind gradually inculcated, as they are able to bear them.

Mark v. 22, &c.
Luk. viii. 46.
John vii. 42.
xviii. 11. xviii. 49.
Acts xiii. 19.
xx. 2. xii. 33.
xx. 23. xxi. 14.
xx. 20. xxviii. 17.
Mark v. 22.
Luk. xviii. 15.
16. Acts x. 25, 26.
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b. xli. 18. John
18. 53. Acts xvi.
18.

c. 18. 19. Mark v.
25 - 37. Luke
viii. 42-52.

d. x. 17. 2 C. 17.
xxxi. 25. Jo.
vi. 17-20. Mark
v. 25 - 37. Luke
viii. 42-52. Acts ix.
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e. 1 K. xii. xxi. 18.
- 20. Acts ix.
40. x. 10.

f. John xli. 4. 11 -
12.

g. xxvii. 39 - 41.
- 42. xxviii. 6, 7. 15.
xxix. 7. H. 13.

h. 1 K. xii. 18. 22.
- 23. Acts ix.
40. 41.

i. Mark i. 31. v.
41. viii. 21. ix.
27. Luke vii. 54.

j. Or this name.
k. 1 K. xii. 18. 22.
Mark i. 45. vi. 1.
14. Acts xxvi.
30.

l. 1 K. i. xii. 22. xx. 30. Mark viii. 23. x. 46. Luke vii. 21. John ix. 1, &c.

thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.)

23 And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise,

24 He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.

25 But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

26 * And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

27 ¶ And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying,

and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.

28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.

29 Then he touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

30 And their eyes were opened: and Jesus straightly charged them, saying, See that no man know it.

31 But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

m. xlii. 23. xv. 22.
xx. 30. 31. xxi.
9. 15. xxii. 40 -
45. Mark x. 47.
48. xl. 10. xli.
35 - 37. Luke
xviii. 35. 39. xxi.
41. John xlii.
12. Rom. i. 8.
ix. 5.

n. 18. 22. Mark
ix. 22. Luke
xviii. 13.

o. viii. 14. xiii. 36.
p. 22. xii. 2. xlii.
53. Mark ix. 23.
24. John iv. 46.

q. xxi. 31. 32. 43.
r. xxi. 31. John ix.
6, 7.

s. Ps. c. vii. 8. 12.
t. xxv. 5. xlii. 7.
John ix. 7. 26.

u. viii. 4. xli. 11.
xvii. 9. Mark v.
43. Luke v. 14.

v. 36.
w. Mark i. 44, 45.
vii. 36.

V. 18-26. (Notes, Mark v. 22-43. Luke viii. 41-56.)

Ruler. The person who superintended the concerns of the Synagogue, and directed the worship there performed. In some places, at least, there were several rulers of the Synagogue; but one was chief over the others. Some think that these rulers were also magistrates, and presided over courts of justice in their several cities, which were subordinate to the Sanhedrim, or great council at Jerusalem.

Worshipped. "Fell down at his feet." (Marg. Ref.) **Even now dead.** "At the point of death;" or, "at the last extremity." The ruler's daughter was not dead when he left her; but he feared that she would die before Jesus could reach his house.

Hem, &c. (20.) or fringe, (Note, Num. xv. 38-40.)

Faith, hath, &c. (22.) Or, "Thy faith hath saved thee;" and the woman was saved, &c.—The word signifies preservation, or deliverance, from temporal or eternal sufferings, to health, or peace, or eternal happiness, according to the context.—The power of Christ was the efficacious cause of the woman's recovery; but her faith, by inducing her to apply to him, secured to her that benefit, from which unbelief excluded many.

Minstrels. (23.) "This custom of instruments at funerals was heathen, and came in but late among the Jews. The ancient Jewish custom was, that—the lamentation was not begun with musical instruments, but only voices of old women, who in a sad modulation strove to extort lamentation from those that were present." (Hammond.) (Marg. Ref.)

Not dead, &c. (24.) "These words of Christ were plainly spoken to those who were preparing for her interment, and performing the funeral rites belonging to it; and therefore only intimate, that she was not so dead as to need their assistance; he being come to awake her, as 'out of a sleep.' (Whitby.) (Marg. Ref.)

V. 27-29. The displays of the power of Christ were varied in almost every conceivable way of beneficence; but he wrought no miracles of vengeance: for even the destruction of the swine, by his permission, was doubtless intended in mercy, and conducive to much good. All his miracles were likewise emblems of the salutary efficacy of

his truth and grace on the souls of men: and nothing is more emphatically descriptive of man's state by nature than blindness. The mind involved in ignorance or error, through the subtlety of Satan, and the influence of corrupt passions and prejudices, continues impenitent, unbelieving, and unholy; but when the understanding is enlightened to see things as they really are; the sinner repents, returns to God, and gladly accepts of his salvation.—The prophet had expressly and repeatedly foretold, that the Messiah should open the eyes of the blind, (Marg. Ref.) and this is the first instance recorded, in which Jesus proved himself to be the Messiah by fulfilling those prophecies.—It appears from the narrative, that these blind men met him immediately after he came out of the ruler's house; and, by accosting him as the Son of David, they acknowledged him to be the promised Saviour and King of Israel. Thus they showed, that they were acquainted with the Scriptures; and it is probable that they rested their hope of recovering sight on the prophecies above mentioned, as well as on the report of the extraordinary miracles which Jesus had already performed. He did not, however, see good, publicly, to attend to their importunate cries, having already abundantly excited the astonishment of the multitude.—But they, not bearing to be disappointed of a cure, followed him into the house, (probably that of Andrew and Peter,) and there, apart from observation, he drew from them an unwavering confession of their faith in his power to perform the miracle, and then answered their believing expectations and earnest desires.

V. 30. **Straitly charged.** "The original word is rendered by Phavorinus, to charge, to command, to appoint with authority. By Hesychus, to command, or charge with a threat. It is a rational earnestness and vehemence, not a passionate." (Hammond.) Our Lord gave this decided and authoritative charge, not only as avoiding all appearance of ostentation, but, also, that he might not needlessly excite the opposition of his enemies, or furnish them with plausible accusations against him; and that the people might not be induced to make commotions, as owning him for the Messiah, and desirous of making him a king. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 31. The joy, gratitude, and amazement of the men, who had recovered their sight, rendered them inca-

x xii. 22, 23. Mark
ix. 17-27.

y xvi. 30, 31. Ex. y
ix. 11, 12. Is.
xxxv. 6. Mark
— 37.
Luke xi. 14.
2. 2 Kings v. 8 Ps.
lxxvii. 1 Jer.
xxxix. 20. Luke
vi. 9.
x xii. 23, 24. Mark
iii. 22. Luke xi.
15. John ii. 20.
d iv. 24, 25. xi.
5. Mark i. 32.
v. 6-36. Luke
iv. 41, 44. xiii.
22. Acts ii. 22.
x. 35.

32 ¶ As they went out, behold, they brought to him * a dumb man possessed with a devil.

33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, * It was never so seen in Israel.

34 But * the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.

35 ¶ And ^b Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the

kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

36 But ^c when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they * fainted, and were scattered abroad, ^d as sheep having no shepherd.

37 Then saith he unto his disciples, * The harvest truly is plenteous, ^e but the labourers are few:

38 * Pray ye therefore ^b the Lord of the harvest, ^f that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

g Luke vi. 12, 13. Acts xiii. 2. 2 Thes. iii. 1. — h x. 1-3. John xxi. 21. Eph. iv. 11. 1 Ps. lxxviii. 11, 18. Jer. lxxiii. 15. Mic. v. 7. Luke x. 1, 2. Acts viii. 4. 1 Cor. xii. 28.

c xiv. 14. xv. 20. Mark vi. 34. Heb. ix. 15. v. 2.
* Or, were fainted and lay down.
d x. 6. xv. 24. Num. xxvii. 17. 1 Kings xxi. 17. 2 Chr. xviii. 16. Job. i. 9-11. Jer. i. 6. 2. 2. xxviii. 5-7. Zech. x. 2. xi. 16. xiii. 7, 8. e xxviii. 17. Mark xvi. 15. Luke x. 2. xxiv. 47. John iv. 35, 38. Acts xvi. 9, 10. xviii. 4. 1 Cor. iii. 9, 2. Cor. vi. 1. Phil. ii. 12. 1 Thes. ii. 11. 1 Thes. x. 12, 13.
f Luke vi. 12, 13. Acts xiii. 2. 2 Thes. iii. 1. — h x. 1-3. John xxi. 21. Eph. iv. 11. 1 Ps. lxxviii. 11, 18. Jer. lxxiii. 15. Mic. v. 7. Luke x. 1, 2. Acts viii. 4. 1 Cor. xii. 28.

pable of refraining themselves, or regardless of the injunction given them. Their motives and purpose were doubtless good; yet their conduct cannot be justified.

V. 32, 33. It seems this man was dumb, not from any natural defect, but by the power of an evil spirit; and that this was generally allowed to be the case. When the evil spirit was cast out, he was immediately capable of speaking; and the spectators of these multiplied and stupendous miracles were so astonished, that they declared the like had never been seen even in Israel, where prophets had often wrought many miracles in confirmation of their testimony. 'This reflection was perfectly just; for no one of the prophets that we read of in the Old Testament, appears to have wrought so many beneficent miracles in his whole life, as our Lord did in this one afternoon.' (Doddridge.) Perhaps this may admit of some doubt, or exception; but the remark is well worthy of attention.

V. 34. The Pharisees, not able to deny the reality or the greatness of the miracle, and fearing lest the people should thence conclude that Jesus was the Messiah, declared that it was not wrought by a divine power, but by that of the prince of the devils: for Jesus, being in league with that arch-apostate, whom all the other fallen angels obeyed as their leader in casting out evil spirits, availed himself of this authority, in order to give a sanction to his false doctrine. What answer Christ at this time made to this most malignant charge, we know not; but on another occasion he very fully confuted and exposed it. (Notes. xii. 22-37.)

V. 35. *Synagogues.* The temple was the centre of the Jewish worship, and no sacrifices might be offered elsewhere; but in process of time it was found necessary to have other places set apart for public prayer and instruction. For these purposes synagogues were built, and after the captivity they became general in all the cities and villages; and probably they were proportionably more numerous than churches and chapels are with us. The word *synagogue* signifies, *gathering together, or a congregation, or the place of a congregation.* Learned men think that forms of worship were steadily used on certain days in the week, as well as on the sabbath-days; and the scriptures, divided into portions, were constantly read in them: so that they were very useful in keeping the people from idolatry. The Levites and Scribes might commonly officiate in them, but this service was not restricted to them: they had stated

rulers and officers, but no regular pastors or teachers; so that competent persons occasionally gave exhortations, as they were disposed or desired to do it: and the case was the same in other nations, where the Jews resided. Christ therefore went round the country, teaching in the synagogues, and no one attempted to interrupt or hinder him. 'It was the manner among the Jews, for divers men to contribute their talents to the exposition of the lesson which was read. This ordinarily belonged to the sons of the prophets, who were brought up in learning the law; and at thirty years old might be made doctors; and they continued under that name, or the other of scribes, till they obtained the spirit of prophecy. In proportion to which was the difference in the Christian Church, betwixt the evangelist, and the doctor, or teacher: the first telling their good news and planting the Gospel; the other waiting, or instructing them further in it.' (Hammond.) It is, however, plain, that others, besides scribes or doctors, were allowed and invited to expound the Scriptures, and give exhortations in the synagogues. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 36-38. Great multitudes resorted from distant places to hear Christ's doctrine; and they not only appeared to be languishing in soul for want of better instructions than those of their formal teachers, but they were also ready to faint with hunger and fatigue, by continuing long at a distance from their habitations. In both senses, they were scattered "as sheep not having a shepherd." There were Priests, Levites, and Scribes, all over the land; but they were *idol-shepherds*, (Note, Zech. xi. 17:) and Christ had compassion on the people, as "perishing for lack of knowledge." In the prospect, therefore, of the vast multitudes which would in a short time, both from Jews and Gentiles, be gathered into the Church, he declared, that a plenteous harvest was growing in the field, which would require many active and industrious labourers to secure it; but there were very few who deserved that character. It therefore was at that time especially the duty of the disciples, to beseech the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers, or able faithful ministers, into the harvest. Christ himself is the Lord of the harvest, and we shall find him in the next chapter sending forth labourers: but it is probable that the disciples did not understand him as speaking of himself, on this occasion. The expression translated, "send forth," literally signifies, "trust forth," and implies the powerful impulse of God upon the heart, which would be necessary to overcome the diffidence and

CHAP. X.

Christ sends out twelve apostles, with power to work miracles, 1. Their names, 2—4. They must not go to Gentiles or Samaritans, but to Israel, 5, 6. He in-

structs them, both as to their preaching and conduct, 7—15. He forewarns them of persecutions, and suggests motives of comfort and constancy, 16—39. He promises blessings to those who should receive them, 40—42.

reluctance of able ministers to enter on that important work, especially when it would expose them to many perils and hardships. 'Word for word, cast them out; for men are very slow in so holy a work.' (*Beza*).—'From this discourse we learn these things worthy to be regarded by all the pastors of Christ's flock. (1.) That 'he who doth not instruct his flock in "the sincere milk of the word," and acquaint them with the things belonging to their eternal peace, from an heart full of love to God and to the souls committed to his charge, deserves not the name of a true shepherd; for the want of these things in the Scribes and Pharisees made Christ complain, that the Jews were "as sheep without a shepherd." (2.) That when the harvest is great, and there be many ready to receive instruction, we should be the more diligent and laborious to afford it them. (3.) That in such cases, when either we are not called to the work, or are placed in another station, we should pray fervently, that God would raise up men, fitted up to their instruction, and zealous for his glory and the good of souls.' (*Whitby*.) This last remark is peculiarly applicable to the present times, and the efforts made in order to evangelize the heathen. (*Sermon before the Missionary Society, 1804, on this text, by the Author.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—8.

Our gracious Lord will not continue his presence or ordinances with those that despise and are weary of them; for in every place he finds abundant opportunities of showing mercy. They who feel themselves miserable through sin and its effects, and who believe that he and he only can deliver them, will submit to any inconveniences in applying to him: and as they are glad of direction and assistance from their stronger brethren, these should be ready to help them, according to ability and opportunity. Christ can see faith in the heart; yet he loves to point it out in those effects, by which it becomes manifest to us also: and when the most sinful and afflicted of the human race earnestly press through difficulties, that they may seek his salvation, they should be of good cheer; for he addresses them as his children, and forgives their sins. It would be far better to have a pardon, and to be left to languish under incurable disease till death released us, than to be cured of our sickness and left under the guilt and power of our sins, to "treasure up wrath against the day of wrath;" yet, if the sin be forgiven, deliverance from pain and sorrow will in due time follow, and consolation in the mean while be afforded us. Even Jesus could not do good so unexceptionably, but proud scribes would censure and accuse him of blasphemy: let us then never expect to escape calumny, nor be deterred from duty by the fear of it. The Lord, who knoweth men's hearts, often hears them say such things within

themselves, concerning him and his Gospel and service, as they would be afraid or ashamed to avow; but he will as certainly call them to a strict account for their evil surmises, as for their wicked words and works. When, at Christ's command, the paralytic arose, and carried home that bed on which he had been brought a helpless cripple, the authority of Christ to pardon, and the man's forgiveness, were at once demonstrated: and when sinners are enabled, at his word, to renounce customary iniquities, and to delight in obeying God's commandments, they too may know that their crimes are all blotted out. Thus men come to Christ, burdened and enslaved by their sins; but when he heals them, and enables them to walk at liberty in newness of life, all who witness the surprising change are led to adore his power and grace, and to glorify God on their account. But as Jesus in his humiliation had power on earth to forgive sins, (which was an act of divine authority,) so, now that he reigns in glory, his mediatorial commission reaches no further; and they who leave the earth unpardoned, must sink under condemnation for ever.

V. 9—17.

Many eminent servants of God have been called, not only from low occupations, but from scenes of gross iniquity. The word of Christ appears as powerful in overcoming avarice or pride, and in rebuking the winds and waves, or in casting out legions of devils. They who have experienced the power of his grace, will compassionate their former companions in sin, and devise means, and willingly incur expense, to bring them into the way of instruction. We must not associate with ungodly men out of love to their vain conversation; but we may, from good will to their souls. We should, however, remember that our good Physician had the power of healing inherent in him, and was in no danger of taking infection; but it is not so with us: we should therefore consider our own constitution, and not needlessly go into unwholesome air, lest, in attempting to do good to others, we get injury to ourselves. Let us rather inquire, whether we have discovered our sickness, and have learned to value and follow the directions of our Physician. For there are yet many stout hearted Pharisees, that are whole in their own estimation, and are more disposed to carp at his words and works, than to wait on him for the healing of their souls. But if we be humbled sinners, and desire his salvation, let us remember that he delights in mercy, and that he "came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance;" and let us learn to copy his mercy, and use means to bring even the vilest of sinners to repentance and faith in the Saviour. How prone is the human heart to self-preference and censoriousness! Let us beware of this leaven, which corrupts those things that are good in themselves, and turns even an act of devotion into an abomina-

AN. 20 XXI. 20.
47. Mark iii. 14.
13. v. 7. Luke
x. 13. John vi.
70. Rev. xii. 1.
xxi. 12-13.
bvi. 13. xviii. 18.
19. Mark iii. 15.
xv. 17, 18. Luke
ix. 1 x. 19. xxi.
12. xviii. 49.
John iii. 27-33.
xvii. 2 x. 21-23.

AND when he had ^a called unto him his twelve disciples, ^b he gave them power ^{*} against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease.

2 Now the names of the twelve

Artis i. 9. iii. 15. 6. xix. 15. — * Rev. 1. 1.

apostles are these; the first. ^a Simon, who is called Peter, and ^b Andrew his brother; ^c James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

13. i. Luke i. 14. John 40-42. Acts i. 13. 1 Pet. i. 1. 2 Pet. i. 1. — c. Mark i. 29. ii. 18. xiii. 3. John x. 22. — f. 21. x. 16. xv. 20. xvi. 37. Mark iii. 17. Luke x. 0. — g. 20. xxi. 1. Acts xxi. 1. Cor. xv. 7. — h. Luke xxii. 8. John xiii. 23. xx. 2. xxi. 20. 24. Acts iii. 1. John i. 3. 4. 2 John i. 3. John i. Rev. i. 1. 9. xxi. 8.

tion. Whilst therefore we judge for ourselves, as in the sight of God, at what seasons the presence and consolations of the heavenly Bridegroom call us to thankful joy and praise; and when his absence, through our sins, or for our humiliation, requires us to join fasting with our confessions and supplications; let us not presume to judge, or prescribe to others, or prefer ourselves to them on such accounts. There are indeed matters in religion so indispensable, that sinners must be urged to them without delay or reserve: but there are others, which in due time and manner may be inculcated; but which hopeful persons cannot receive at present, and which are not needful, and might prove injurious to them; and much mischief has been done, both in respect of doctrines, external observances, and austerities, by "putting new wine into old bottles:" but wisdom is profitable to direct.

V. 18-26.

Rulers and superior persons are sometimes brought to Christ by those afflictions, which admit of no remedy from their secular distinctions: and when the greatest feel their need of Christ, and know his power and dignity, they will abase themselves as much before him as the meanest. Even amiable and dutiful children are often the source of much care and sorrow to their parents: but the best remedy, in respect both of their lives and souls, is to apply to Christ in their behalf; as life and death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, are entirely at his disposal. How various are the distresses and humiliating diseases, to which sin hath subjected our species! And in how many ways doth true faith operate, amidst the fears, diffidence, shame, remaining ignorance and infirmity of those, that are made partakers of it! Yet if we do but touch, as it were, the hem of Christ's garment by living faith, our most inveterate maladies will be healed; but there is no other remedy: and we need not fear his knowing those things concerning us, which are our grief and burden, and which we should not wish to disclose to any earthly friend. We must not, however, desire to conceal our obligations to his power and grace: our comfort and his glory are concerned in their being made known; and when he sees the humble believer ready to sink with shame and terror, he will, by some encouraging token, show his acceptance and special love. But he often delays to bring intended relief till things come to an extremity; thus he proves our faith and patience, and renders the mercy doubly welcome, and our gratitude and admiration more abundant. They, who treat his words with contempt, and expect nothing from his power, are not meet persons to witness his glory.—Even death, to those whom he loves, is only a sleep: they will shortly awake at his word: and as our deceased Christian friends will share with us this joyful resurrection, we should not "sorrow as men without hope,"

though we expect not their return to us in this world. And if this single instance of Christ's raising one that was newly dead so increased his fame, what will be his glory, when "all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation!"

V. 27-34.

Still we are astonished with the lustre of the Redeemer's power and love. Let sinners then copy the example of these blind men: let them stand before the Son of David, though they cannot behold him; and let them beseech him to have mercy upon them, and open their eyes to see his glory and preciousness, his truth and will: let them persist in following him with their entreaties, and in due time he will notice and help them. In this and in every other respect we need to cry unto him daily to increase our faith; that we may believe, assuredly, that he is both able and willing to do every thing for us, which pertains to our salvation. If faith be not wanting in us, love and power will not be found wanting in him; but he will say, "according to your faith be it unto you;" and we shall be sent forth, as it were, to proclaim "his praises, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light."—Whilst sinners remain under the power of Satan, they are deprived of the best use of the gift of speech; and cannot speak to any good purpose; but when Christ delivers them, their mouths are opened to show forth his praise.—We should therefore bring those to him that are not willing to come of themselves; and entreat him for those whom Satan so possesses that they will not pray for themselves.—Nothing can convince such as indulge pride and malice, of the humbling truths of God's word: they will believe any absurdity rather than the divinely authenticated Scriptures; and the injurious reflections which they cast on those who are diligently employed in doing good to their fellow-creatures, show the enmity of their hearts against a holy God. We should therefore go on in our work without regarding them: and, as to this day vast multitudes are "as sheep not having a shepherd," we should be compassionate, and do all that we can to help them. The harvest that is yet to be reaped, (and ere long, according to the prophecies,) is very plentiful; the real labourers are few: we should therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to raise up and send forth many, who will labour in the word and doctrine, and in bringing souls to Christ, instead of labouring to advance, enrich, and indulge themselves. This is a duty too much neglected: but when God shall stir up the hearts of Christians every where to attend to it, we may expect the dawning of those happy days, when the Gospel shall be known and believed all over the earth.

9 * Provide * neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses;

10 Nor ^b scrip for *your* journey, neither ^c two coats, neither shoes, nor yet ^d staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

11 And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, ^e inquire who in it is worthy; ^f and there abide till ye go thence.

12 And when ye come into an house, salute it.

13 And if the house be ^h worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

14 And ⁱ whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words; when ye depart out of that house or city, ^j shake off the dust of your feet.

15 ^k Verily, I say unto you, ^l it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

16 ^m Behold, I send you forth ⁿ as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore ^o wise as serpents, ^p and ^q harmless as doves.

17 But ^r beware of men; ^s for they will deliver you up to the ^t councils, and they will ^u scourge you in their synagogues:

V. 11—15. When the apostles arrived at any city or town, they must inquire, what persons resided there of good repute for piety and probity, and address them with the first proposal of the Gospel: and in case they received, and entertained them, they must abide with them, (if convenient,) till they left the place; they might not appear to be capricious, dissatisfied with their accommodations, or desirous of going from house to house, to partake of entertainments. When they entered any house, they must salute those who resided in it in the customary manner, wishing that the peace and blessing of God might rest on them, and proposing to them the Gospel of peace and salvation. And if the family, or any in it, were pious persons, disposed to welcome the Gospel, the blessing would rest on them, and the messengers of Christ would further instruct and pray for them; but where this was not the case, the prayers and endeavours of the apostles would return in blessings on themselves. The imperative mood is here used, for the future, as it is generally said: but it seems also to imply a direction to ministers, how to act in such cases. When, however, their gracious proposal met with an obstinate rejection, on leaving the place they must "shake off the dust of their feet." (*Marg. Ref.*) It is said that the Jews, on returning from heathen countries, thus shook off the dust that clave to them; as afraid of bringing any pollution into the holy land, and as renouncing all connexion with idolaters: so that the conduct of the apostles in this respect, would be understood as a decided protestation against the conduct of the persons concerned; and a declaration, that they considered them as equally criminal and exposed to divine wrath with the Gentiles themselves. To this injunction our Lord added, in the most solemn manner, that it would be more tolerable, even for the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for those of such a city. Their obstinate impenitence, and unbelief, amid such abundant opportunities of instruction and conviction, would evince a more determined enmity against God, than all the gross abominations of Sodom, for which it had been visited with tremendous vengeance: and though they might escape punishment in this world; yet in the day of judgment and final retribution, their doom would be still more intolerable. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 16—17. Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues.

indeed is wanting in some manuscripts, but it is found in the earliest. It is not said, that the apostles raised any dead persons, before the descent of the Holy Spirit; and probably they did not: but the charge, at this time given, evidently referred to the subsequent, as well as the introductory part of their ministry. They were expressly prohibited to make any personal advantage of these miraculous powers, as if they would sell the gift of God for money, (*Acts* viii. 15, 20;) but must confer the benefit freely, as they had received it. They, who urge this text against the preachers of the Gospel receiving a maintenance for their labour, evidently pervert it, and set it against the plainest declarations of the New Testament. It is, however, greatly to be desired, that a more decided superiority to the love of filthy lucre were generally observable among the ministers of Christianity.—Doubtless Judas preached, and wrought miracles, as well as the other apostles: and, probably for his credit's sake, he resisted the temptation of making any gain of his powers, at least he was not suspected by the other apostles. (*Note*, vii. 22, 23.)

V. 9, 10. The command "freely to give;" and the prohibition, to *provide*, or *possess*, money to bear expenses, should be compared together. The apostles, (and doubtless all other ministers,) must be eminently disinterested; yet they must trust in God for support, even in those places where they were strangers. They were not allowed to carry with them either money, or provisions, in a scrip, or bag, or clothes, or shoes; or a superfluous staff, in case any thing happened to that with which they walked: for the Lord engaged to provide for their wants, by disposing those to whom they went, to supply them. This they might conscientiously take, as the labourer is worthy of his maintenance; and more they must not covet. The word rendered *purses* signifies *girdles*: it was customary for travellers to carry money for ordinary occasions, in a pocket or fold, within their girdles. "The ministers of the word must cast away all cares, that might hinder them the least."—For this journey,—that they might feel some taste of God's providence; for at their return, the Lord asked them, whether they lacked any thing by the way? (*Reza*).—"He is worthy of his food;" not ofainties; for it becomes not a teacher to fare deliciously." (*Theophylact*.)

x Pet. i. 6. Acts
v. 25-27. xii. 1.
— i. xxi. 32.
ii. 4. xxiv. xxv.
2 Tim. i. 16, 17.
v. xii. 4. Mark
xii. 2. 2 Tim.
i. 6. Rev. i. 9.
vi. 8. x. 7.
v. 13. xii. 11.
i. Luke xii. 11.
xii. 13.
a. vi. 25. 31. 34.
Phil. iv. 6. Jam.
i. 5.
b. x. 1. 2. 12. 15.
Jer. i. 7. Dan.
ix. 10-19. Acts
iv. 8-14. v. 29.
23. vi. 10. xxvi.
2. x. 2. 2 Tim. iv.
17.
c. 2 Sam. xxiii. 2.
Mark xii.
Luke x. 13. xii. 15. Acts ii. 4. v. 8. vii. 54. xxviii. 25. 1 Pet. i. 12. 2 Pet. i. 21. — d. vi.
12. Luke xii. 30-32. — e. 31. 35. xxiv. 10. Mic. vii. 5, 6. Zech. xiii. 2. Mark xiii. 12.
73. Luke xii. 51-53. xxi. 16. 17.

18 And ye shall ^a be brought before governors and kings for my sake, ^b for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

19 But ^a when they deliver you up, ^a take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for ^b it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

20 For it is not ye that speak, ^c but the Spirit of ^d your Father which speaketh in you.

21 And ^e the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the

child: and ^f the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.

22 And ye ^g shall be hated of all men ^h for my name's sake; ⁱ but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

23 But ^k when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not ^l have gone over the cities of Israel, ^m till the Son of man be come.

V. 16-18. Our Lord next taught the apostles to prepare for persecution. He sent them forth as harmless defenceless sheep into the midst of rapacious and cruel wolves, who would neither want will nor power to devour them, except as they were divinely protected. It would therefore behoove them to unite the caution and sagacity, of which serpents have ever been the emblem, with the simple, inoffensive, gentle, pure, and loving temper of the dove; that they might avoid every thing which could needlessly exasperate, or give an advantage to, their enemies; all intermeddling with secular matters not belonging to them; and all rashness, violence, the appearance of evil, or selfishness. 'This is to be wise as serpents; to be circumspect in declining their snares, and giving them no just occasion to afflict us; and to be harmless as doves, is to offend no man by word or example; and so to give them no cause to do evil to us.' (*Theophylact*.) Circumstanced as the apostles would be, their most determined courage and patience must be tempered with prudence; nor must they be rendered unsuspecting by the consciousness of integrity and benevolence. On the contrary, they ought to beware of men, as of enemies more implacable and fierce than wolves or tigers, and also most treacherous and insidious. No dependence therefore must be placed on their engagements; no regard paid to their flatteries or professions of respect and friendship; no expectations formed of any thing, but injurious treatment of every kind and from all quarters. It was useful therefore that the apostles should count their cost, and prepare to face danger and endure affliction. For they would certainly be apprehended, and delivered up as criminals to the public councils of the nation, and condemned to be scourged in the synagogues, where their consistories about ecclesiastical affairs were held; nay, they would at length be brought before the Roman governors and the kings of the nations, for their attachment to the name and cause of Christ. Thus they would have an opportunity of declaring his Gospel in their hearing, which being neglected would turn to a testimony against them.

V. 19, 20. The apostles were poor and unlearned men, not used to speak before public assemblies, or earthly potentates, and might fear lest they should dishonour the cause, by impropriety of conduct and language; but they needed not to be solicitous on that account; for, as they were not called to plead their own cause, but that of their Lord, so he would immediately suggest to them what they should speak; inasmuch, that their answers would

not so much be their own thoughts, or words, as those of the Holy Spirit, from God their heavenly Father, speaking by them. (*Marg. Ref.*) The case here supposed was extraordinary; and neither the direction nor the promise is applicable to ordinary cases. Yet every minister and Christian is authorized to expect assistance adequate to the occasion, whatever it be.

V. 21, 22. The apostles might imagine that their harmless, holy, and prudent conduct, their beneficent miracles, and the glad tidings of the Messiah's advent, would conciliate them favour from great numbers. But, on the contrary, Christ assured them that they would experience the most rancorous enmity even from near relations: for the Gospel being contrary to the prejudices, pride, and lusts of men; interfering with their worldly interests and projects; and opposed by those evil spirits, which work in the children of disobedience; would certainly occasion vehement convulsions in cities and nations, and excite the jealousy of rulers; throw men into different parties, and produce violent controversies, and at length furious persecutions. Then the enemies of the truth would forget the ties of consanguinity, or affinity: brethren would apprehend and accuse one another, and procure each other's death: parents, regardless of natural affection, would prosecute their own children to death; and even children, in violation of all their duties and obligations, would rise up against their own parents, to procure their execution: nay, the preachers and professors of Christianity would be hated by men of all nations, sects, and characters, for the sake of Christ; yea, by all men, except those who were won over to embrace the Gospel. This would expose them to such dangers, hardships, and sufferings, as would violently tempt them to apostatize. But they, who continued to cleave to the Lord, and held out to the end, would be preserved from all real damage, and recompensed with everlasting felicity; whilst apostates would be finally ruined and lost. (*Marg. Ref.*) The word *endure* implies not only *suffering*, but being *tried*, and *standing the trial*, as gold does the fire. (*Marg. Ref.*) This trial hypocrites cannot endure, but true believers do. Judas did not endure to the end; but the other apostles did. 'He that endureth to the end of these days of persecution from the unbelieving Jews shall be saved from the destruction coming on them.' (*Whitby*.) This may perhaps be implied; but surely endurance to the end of life, and the everlasting salvation of the soul, are principally intended.

m 2 Sam. xi. 11. 24 The "disciple is not above his
 Luke vi. 40. master, nor the servant above his lord.
 John xiii. 16. 25 It is enough for the disciple that he
 xv. 20, 31. Heb. be as his master, and the servant as his
 xii. 2-4. lord. "If they have called the Master
 m 18. 34. xii. 24. of the house * Beelzebub, how much
 Mark iii. 22. more shall they call them of his house-
 Luke xii. 15. hold?
 John vii. 20. 26 ° Fear them not therefore: " for
 viii. 49. xi. 20. there is nothing covered, that shall not
 * Or, Beelzebub. be revealed; and hid, that shall not be
 c 1 Pr. xxviii. known.
 1 xix. 25. Is 27 What ° I tell you in darkness, that
 xii. 10. 11. x. 8. speak ye in light: and what ye hear in
 1, 2. 16. 7. 8. 10. the ear, " that preach ye upon the house-
 13. Jer. i. 10. tops.
 16. Ez. ii. 6. 28 And ° fear not them which kill the
 Act. vi. 13. 19. body, but are not able to kill the soul:
 1 Pr. iii. 16. but rather ° fear him which is " able to
 P. Luke vi. 22. destroy both soul and body in hell.
 Luke vi. 17. xii. 2, 3. xxiv. 47. Acts i. 8

V. 23. The open manner in which Christ told his apostles of the persecutions which awaited them, powerfully evinced a consciousness of authority, of influence over their hearts, and of power to support and recompense them. They must in no wise conceal or palliate their message, in order to avoid persecution: yet they ought not rashly to expose themselves, or to rush into danger; but, when persecuted in one city, to flee to another, and there preach the Gospel. This might often drive them from apparent scenes of usefulness; yet it would prove no injury to the common cause, for they would not have gone over all "the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man should come." This phrase signifies, either his coming with the Roman army to destroy the Jews: or else his coming to the final judgment; and, seeing the apostles were none of them to live till the final judgment, it seems necessary to understand this of his coming to 'avenge his quarrel on the Jewish nation.' (Whitby).—The apostles met with no persecutions till after the day of Pentecost; so that subsequent events must be intended, and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans seems especially pointed out. Persecution prevented the apostles from preaching the Gospel throughout the whole land so fully as they might otherwise have done. The conversion of the Gentiles, after a time, found many of them in other employment; and when the judgments of God on the Jews took place, several cities of Israel had not been visited or stately instructed by the preachers of the Gospel.

V. 24—26. The disciple is not generally a person of greater dignity or excellency than his teacher, or the servant than his master; nor ought he to expect greater respect and deference: but never were disciples or servants so inferior to their Lord and Master, as Christ's were. If then they met with injurious usage and opprobrious language in the course of their ministry, they should remember, that the great Master of the family, notwithstanding his divine excellency, wisdom, holiness, and beneficence, had been called Beelzebub, as if he were the prince of the devils, or in league with him; and it ought to satisfy them, (his domestics,) to be as their Lord, and treated in the same manner, considering their immense inferiority and great unworthiness. They were therefore exhorted not to fear those who might load them with reproachful names or false accusations, or charge them with base motives or designs; for the time would soon come, when all secrets would be disclosed; and then their characters, principles, motives, and intentions, would be made known, and fully justified, and the malignity and wicked-

ness of their accusers detected and put to shame.—

These words are capable of two good senses. Let not the dread of these persecutors affright you from preaching the Gospel, as despairing of success; for though at present it seems to be hidden from the world, and it is like to be obscured a while by the calumnies of the Jews and others, I will cause it to shine through all the world, and dissipate all the clouds they cast over it, and break through all obstacles, and will render it mighty to cast down—

every high thought, &c. (2 Cor. x. 5.) 'Or thus: Fear not the calumnies with which they shall load you; for I will make the innocency and excellency of your doctrine as clear as the light; and your integrity in dispersing it, and your patience in suffering for it, to redound to your praise, throughout all ages, and especially at the revelation of the Lord from heaven.' (Whitby).

V. 27, 28. As the apostles could not be cut off till they had finished their testimony, they ought to be very bold and zealous in declaring, in the most public manner, those truths which Christ had taught them privately, as by a whisper in their ears; and even to proclaim them from the tops of the houses, according to the usage of the Jews concerning those things which they desire to make known to all the neighbourhood. This indeed would expose them to much enmity, and even endanger their lives; but if their persecutors should be permitted to proceed as far as possible, they could only kill the mortal body, a little before the time when it would otherwise die of disease or natural decay; for they could by no means destroy the immortal soul, either by terminating its existence, or preventing its immediate and final felicity. And though the tortures which might thus be endured would be dreadful to nature, yet they would not be comparable to the misery that God was able to inflict, in the destruction of both body and soul in hell. The apostles and other servants of Christ ought not, therefore, to fear the impotent malice of man, but the omnipotent, everlasting, and righteous indignation of God, which they would certainly incur, if they apostatized for fear of persecution, or failed to fill their important ministry. 'These words contain a certain evidence, that the soul dies not with the body, but continues afterwards in a state of sensibility. That which men can do to the body, they cannot do to the soul. They, who by killing the body, make the soul also to perish, till the reunion and revivescence both of body and soul, do also kill the soul; and they, who, by killing the body, render the soul insensate, do also kill the soul. For it is not easy to conceive, how a thinking and perceiving being can be more killed, than

x Luke xii. 6, 7.
* Halfpenny far-
thing, the tenth
of the Roman
penny.
y Ps. civ. 27-30.
z 1 Sam xiv. 45.
2 Sam xiv. 11.
1 Kings i. 52.
Luke xii. 7 xxi.
18 Acts xxvii.
34.

a vi. 26. xii. 11.
12 Ps. viii. 5.
Luke xlii. 24.
xlii. 15, 16.
1 Cor. ix. 9, 10.
b Ps. cxlvi. 40.
c Luke xii. 6, 9.
d John ix. 22.
e Rom. x. 9, 10.
1 Tim. vi. 12.
f 2 Tim. i. 12.
g 1 John iv. 15.
Rev. ii. 13.
e xx. 34 1 Sam
ii. 30. Rev. iii. 5.
12, 13. 2 Pet. ii. 1.

29 ¶ Are not * two sparrows sold for
a farthing? y and one of them shall not
fall on the ground without your Father.

30 But z the very hairs of your head
are all numbered.

31 Fear ye not therefore, * ye are of
more value than many sparrows.

32 Whosoever therefore shall b confess
me before men, c him will I confess also
before my Father which is in heaven.

33 But whosoever shall d deny me be-
fore men, him will I also deny before my
Father which is in heaven.

—J xxvi. 70-75. Mark viii. 38. Luke ix. 26. xii. 9. 2 Tim. ii.
12, 13. 2 Pet. ii. 1. 1 John ii. 23.

‘by depriving it of all sensation, thought and percep-
tion; the body itself being killed by a total privation of
—sense and motion. It remains that the soul doth not
perish with the body, nor is it reduced into an insen-
sible state by the death of it.’ (Whitby.)

V. 29-31. The apostles might expect, that their
enemies would at length kill their bodies; but this could
not possibly be effected, without the permission of their
almighty Father. His providence watched over all his
creatures, even the meanest of them. Sparrows, for in-
stance, were so inconsiderable, that two were usually sold
for a farthing; yet not one of them could fall to the ground
and die, either by a natural or violent death, except by his
immediate interposition. Even the very hairs of his people
were all numbered and registered: every thing was de-
signed important that related to them, and especially to those that
were employed to spread his Gospel. In every way the
apostles and the other servants of God were unspeakably
more valuable than many sparrows: it could not there-
fore be supposed, that their Father and Friend would per-
mit any enemy to do them real harm. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 32, 33. For the further encouragement of the
apostles, and others who should be exposed to persecution
for Christ's sake, he declared, that every one, who boldly
acknowledged him, and professed his truth in the face of
danger and opposition, without turning aside, from fear
or shame, shall be abundantly recompensed; for he will
confess and own him as a disciple, a friend, a brother, in
the presence of his Father; especially in the day of judg-
ment and final separation betwixt his people and his en-
emies. But, at the same time, whosoever shall be induced
by worldly motives to deny Christ, or renounce his ser-
vice, will be denied by him before his Father, and left to
perish with his enemies; notwithstanding his former pro-
fession, gifts, or station in the Church. Every denial of
Christ cannot be here intended; for Peter denied him, yet
repented, and was pardoned. That only can be meant,
which is persisted in: in like manner every confession of
Christ cannot be entitled to the blessed recompense here
promised; but that only, which is the genuine, and the
constant language of faith and love. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 34-36. The Gospel, beyond doubt, in its genuine
tendency, is suited to reconcile men to God and to each
other; and if all were consistent Christians, peace must be
universal. But the world lieth in wickedness, and under

34 ¶ Think not e that I am come to
send peace on earth: I came not to send
peace, but a sword.

35 For I am come f to set a man
at variance against his father, and the
daughter against her mother, and the
daughter-in-law against her mother-in-
law.

36 And g a man's foes shall be they of
his own household.

37 He h that loveth father or mother
more than me, is not worthy of me; and
he that loveth son or daughter more than
me, is i not worthy of me.

e Jer. xv. 10
Luke xii. 49-
53. John vii. 40
—52. Acts xiii.
45-50. xiv. 2, 4.
(2) xxiv. 10. Mic.
xii. 1, 6. Mark
xiii. 12. Luke
xxi. 15.
f Gen. xli. 15, 19.
g Gen. xli. 17
—26. 1 Sam
xvii. 29. 2 Sam.
xxii. 11. Job xix.
13-19. Ps. xlii.
9, 13. Jer.
xii. 6. xx. 10.
John xlii. 19.
h xxii. 27. Deut.
xxxiii. 9. Luke
xiv. 26. John v.
33. 13-17.
2 Cor. v. 14, 15.
Phil. iii. 7-9.
i xxii. 8. Lul.
xx. 35. xlii. 36.
2 The. i. 5-7.
Rev. iii. 4.

the wicked one; Christians must profess the truth in opposi-
tion to all error, and obey their Lord in opposition to all
the maxims, customs, fashions, and vices of the world;—
and the end of Christ's coming was to set up a heavenly
kingdom in the midst of Satan's empire, built upon its
ruins. Where no true religion is found, men may avoid
theological disputes, whatever else they quarrel about; for
they are essentially of one party, and their notions and
observances admit of what some call an *intercommunity*;
but where the standard of the cross is erected, and sinners
enlist under the Redeemer's banner, they are no longer of
the world, but of another kingdom, the laws, maxims,
motives, and interests of which, are diametrically opposite
to those of the god and prince of this world. This must
offend Satan and his servants; and the most harmless dis-
ciples and ministers of Christ will in consequence be
reproached, calumniated, opposed, and persecuted: and
when the enemy can excite the princes of this world to
oppose the Gospel, the sword of religious wars, of mas-
sacres, and of persecution, will be sent forth. Thus the
wolves devour the inoffensive sheep, and then throw the
blame on them as the authors of the quarrel! Whenever
men *called Christians* have persecuted others, it must have
arisen from their not being *real Christians*, or from their
not understanding the religion which they professed: for,
patient meek-endurance of persecution, and courageous
profession and obedience in the midst of it, are the charac-
teristics of true Christianity. In the present state of
human nature, however, it must be expected, and our
Lord foretold, that the Gospel would give occasion to
furious and bloody conflicts; so that even families would
be divided into parties, and men would treat their nearest
relatives as their worst enemies: and this hath in fact been
the case, in every nation, city, town or village, where
the true Gospel of Christ has been successfully preached.
(Marg. Ref.) It has been shown, that instead of the
happy and prosperous days, which the Jews expected when
the Messiah came, the most fierce and bloody contests
that ever embroiled that, or perhaps any other nation, fol-
lowed his coming, till judgment came upon them to the
utmost. But this was no otherwise the consequence of
his coming, than as their rejection of him provoked God
to give them up to judicial infatuation; for they did not
in the least quarrel about Christianity: and this cannot
be considered as the true interpretation of these verses.

xxvi. 24 xxviii.
32. Mark vii. 34
x. 21 Luke ix. 27.
22. xiv. 27.
John xiii. 17.
xvi. 25. 26.
Mark viii. 35, 36.
Luke xiii. 33.
John xiii. 25.
Phil. i. 20. 21.
2 Tim. iv. 6-8.
Rev. ii. 10.
m. xviii. 5 Luke
ix. 48. x. 16.
John xiii. 20.
1 Th. ii. 2 Cor. v.
20 Gal. iv. 14
1 Tim. iv. 8.
John v. 20 xiii.
41-49 Phil. ii.

10, 11. 1 John ii. 22, 23. 2 John 9. — Gen. xx. 7. 1 Kings xvii. 9-10. 20-24. xviii. 3.
4. 2 Kings iv. 8-10. 16. 17. 32-37. Acts xvi. 15. Rom. xvi. 1-4. 23. 2 Tim. i. 16-18.
3 John 5-8.

38 And he that ¹ taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

39 He that ¹ findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it.

40 ¶ He ² that receiveth you, receiveth me, ³ and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.

41 He ^o that receiveth a prophet in

the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive ² a righteous man's reward.

42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto ^o one of these little ones, ² a cup of cold water only ² in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, ³ He shall in no wise lose his reward.

p. vi. 14 6 18.
xvi. 27. xxv. 34.
— 40. Is. ii. 10.
Luke xiv. 13, 14.
1 Cor. xii. 17.
2 Thes. i. 6, 7.
John 8.
q. xiii. 3-6 10.
12 Zech. xiii.
7. Mark ix. 42.
John xviii. 2.
1 Cor. viii. 16-19.
r. Mark ix. 41. xiii. 42. 43. xiv. 7, 8.
9 Cor. viii. 12.
9 Prov. xiv. 14.
Luce vi. 35.
2 Cor. ix. 8-15.
Phil. iv. 15-19.
Heb. vi. 10.

V. 37-39. When matters came to such extremities, that a man must lose the comfort and favour, and incur the enmity of his nearest relations, unless he renounced or disobeyed Christ, he that was found to love father or mother, son or daughter, more than Christ, would be deemed unworthy of the privileges of his kingdom. Nay, he that refused to carry his cross, (as malefactors used to do, when they were led to be crucified,) and to suffer death, rather than renounce Christ and the Gospel, would be judged unworthy to be called the disciple of such a Master, seeing he would not follow his example of patient suffering for the cause of God and truth. He, therefore, that thus saved his life from imminent peril, whilst he thought himself a gainer by finding the life of his body, would lose all the true comfort and usefulness even of this life, and also the life of his precious soul; but he that lost his temporal life, for Christ's sake, would find it amply made up to him by everlasting life in heaven. (*Marg. Ref.*) It is manifest that in these verses our Lord claims and demands that supreme and entire love from all his disciples, with which the law requires us to love the LORD our God. This he never would have done, had he not been "one with the Father;" and had not our love of him, as Emmanuel, been the proper evidence and effect of our returning, by repentance and faith, to that supreme love of God, from which we as sinners have departed.—No mere creature could have made such a claim, without becoming the rival of God, who "will not give his glory to another;" but "he that honoureth the Son," "honoureth the Father also."

V. 40-42. Christ here concludes this most solemn and interesting address, by assuring the apostles, that he should consider himself immediately concerned in the reception which was given to them: inasmuch, that they who should entertain them, out of love to their message and a disposition to obey it, would be recompensed in the same manner, as if they had welcomed him to their houses and to their hearts; and they, who thus received him as their Saviour, in fact received the Father himself to be their God and Portion. Indeed, at any time, he that should entertain a prophet, or a holy messenger of God, as such, and for the sake of him that sent him, would be recompensed in answer to the benedictions and prayers of the prophet, with a reward fit to be conferred even upon the prophet himself: and, in like manner, he that should receive a righteous man, a true disciple of Christ, out of love to his character and his master, would receive a reward meet to be bestowed on a righteous man. Yea, if any man should give to one of the meanest of Christ's

disciples, even the most obscure, despised, and lowly among them, a cup of water to drink, because he was regarded as a disciple, having no other means in his power by which to testify his love; even this inconsiderable service should by no means pass unnoticed, or without a gracious recompense. 'How great soever your persecutions are, and how dangerous soever it be to profess to be a follower of Christ, yet shall no man have reason to fear the entertaining of you; for the same protection which awaits you, and the same reward that attends you, shall await those that receive you. It shall be, as if they had entertained not only angels, but Christ and God himself. He that doth support, and enable a prophet to do his work that sent him, shall receive the same reward that he should if himself had been sent to prophesy.' (*Hammond.*) This, 'as it is a great incitement to others to express their kindness to Christ's ministers and faithful servants; so it is also to his ministers, to apply themselves to his service with a ready mind, and with the utmost diligence, in the execution of their pastoral charge.' (*Whitby.*) (*Marg. Ref.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-6.

The Lord never encourages us to pray for any thing, except as he is ready to bestow it in answer to our prayers. "From his fulness" ministers in every age receive their ordinary qualifications, even as the apostles did their miraculous powers: he is our Head of authority and influence, the fountain of honour, wisdom, power, and holiness;—and all true ministers have their commission and instructions from Him, in whatever way they obtain their outward designation to that office. Though they cannot miraculously cure men's bodies, yet, by the power of Christ, they are healers of souls; and deliverers from the bondage and possession of the devil. Whatever a vain world may think, the names of Christ's apostles are far more justly honourable than those of the most powerful monarchs, the most illustrious conquerors, or the most celebrated philosophers, which are renowned in the records of mankind. And it in no degree deducted from their true honour, that some of them had been fishermen, and that one had been a publican; that they were all sinners, saved by grace alone, loving their Saviour, and longing above all things to recommend him to their fellow sinners on every side. This is the grand peculiarity of that minister, who is 'moved by the Holy Ghost to take the office upon him'; but many have the outward appointment, who are strath-

CHAP. XI.

Jesus continues to preach in the cities, 1. John Baptist sends disciples to him, whom he refers to his miracles, 2—6. His testimony to John, 7—15. The perverseness of the people concerning both John and Christ, 16—19. He upbraids the impenitency of those who had most

witnessed his mighty works; and denounces woes against Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, 20—24. He adores the wise and holy sovereignty of the Father, in revealing his truth; and declares his own personal and mediatorial power and majesty, 25—27. He invites the weary to come unto him for rest, 28—30.

gers and enemies to this inward determination and desire.—Indeed, there was one traitor among the apostles, whose infamy is indelible; and, proportionably, this will be the case at last with all, who, bearing this sacred office, “seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ.” At present Providence must direct us where to exercise our ministry; for every restriction is now taken off, and we are authorized to preach the Gospel to every creature. There are lost sheep in every land, as well as of the house of Israel; and we must seek them out, wherever scattered in this wicked world, that they may be brought home to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

V. 7—15.

We must still begin by preaching repentance towards God, as well as faith in our Lord Jesus Christ: for the kingdom of God is not set up, nor ever can be, in a proud, carnal, and impenitent heart; and nothing can be more important to usefulness, than to avoid all appearance of a mercenary disposition. Many, who profess great things in various ways, with some ambiguous reference to the power of Christ, and faith in his name, stand detected, in the judgment of every cautious inquirer, by this single mark; “They make their pretensions a very lucrative trade, and ‘turn what they would have believed to be the gift of God ‘into ready money.’ But of all employments by which men grow rich, live in splendour or luxury, or aggrandize their families, none is more infamous than that of a hireling minister; and it is peculiarly honourable, when they, who have other means of decent subsistence, preach the Gospel to the poor as freely as they have received it. Yet they who are not in circumstances to do this, may very lawfully and honourably receive a maintenance for their services; for “the labourer is worthy of his meat:” and if they be sent to places, where they have but little prospect of support, they should go on in their work with simplicity and diligence, casting all their care upon the Lord. He will no doubt provide what is really needful; and they will generally see his hand in the way by which they are supplied, and taste his love in their temporal provision, even more than those do who have greater abundance: nor need they scruple to receive what is thus conferred, as it will not deduct from the independence and true dignity of the ministerial character. The preacher of the Gospel is the ambassador of peace, and his commission reaches the vilest sinners: yet he should associate with the most pious and conscientious persons in every place: for, though proud self-righteous morality or religion indisposes men to receive the Gospel, yet the fear of God

possessing the heart, is a real preparation for the embracing of it.—Ministers should manifest steadiness and consistency in their conduct, an evident indifference about outward accommodation, and moderation in all things. Their demeanour should be expressive of benevolence: and their friendly language, fervent prayers, and pious discourse, should be substituted in the stead of those hollow compliments and flatteries, by which numbers hide their selfishness. Diligent labours in the cause of Christ are never in vain; and the prayers of his servants for others will surely bring down blessings on themselves. Their goodwill, however, must not degenerate into timidity: the whole counsel of God must be declared; and they, who will not attend to the gracious message, must be shown in the most decisive manner, by words and deeds, that their conduct is abhorred, and their state considered most dangerous and deplorable. This will generally be done to better effect, by declining to associate with them, and by showing a determination to have no fellowship in their perishing sinful pleasures and pursuits. The Gospel, though not at present confirmed with miracles wrought by the preachers, is so authenticated by external and internal evidence, and, when faithfully declared, it so manifests its divine authority to every man’s conscience, that all, who reject it, “hate the light because their deeds are evil.” So that even when enemies of the truth are free from great enormities in their visible conduct, their doom will be more dreadful in a future state, than even that of the inhabitants of Sodom. This should be seriously laid to heart by all that hear the Gospel, lest their privileges should only serve to increase their future condemnation. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 16—33.

The ministers of the Gospel should advert to their character and situation, and count the cost: they are “sent forth as sheep in the midst of wolves;” let them then remember to be harmless and gentle as lambs and doves, not resisting evil, nor retorting reproaches and injuries. Let them study to temper zeal and boldness with prudence and discretion, and so to act, that their enemies may find no plausible pretext for their malignity. But this wisdom is from above, and must be sought by earnest prayer; or it will degenerate into a time-serving caution. Yet could they perfectly unite “the wisdom of the serpent and the “harmlessness of the dove,” they could not escape the hatred and contempt of men. They that decidedly take the Lord’s part against an ungodly world, will be opposed reviled, ensnared, and evil entreated, by men in general. The most excellent servants of Christ, in all ages hitherto,

AND it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of ^a commanding his twelve disciples, ^b he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

2 Now ^c when John had heard ^d in the prison the works of Christ, ^e he sent two of his disciples,

3 And said unto him, 'Art thou he that

should come, or do we look for another?'

have been imprisoned, scourged, and put to death, as malefactors; and they have been brought before kings and rulers, for no other crime than bearing the name and preaching the Gospel of Christ! In this way the Lord often brings truth to the hearing of those, who would otherwise have continued strangers to it; yet, alas! this testimony commonly turns *against* them.—The work of the ministry requires study, and preparation, and diligence; yet should the upright servant of Christ be suddenly called to declare his message, or bear testimony to the truth, before the princes of the earth, he need not be anxious how, or what, he should speak, but confide assuredly on Him, who hath promised to give his people "a mouth" and wisdom, which all their enemies shall not be able to "gainsay or resist." Opportunities of doing good may be expected in every place; we are not therefore required to stay among enraged persecutors: yet nothing must cause us to neglect our work, or conceal our relation and obligations to Christ. If then we be ready to faint or murmur on account of the difficulties that we meet with, we should look to our Lord and Master; for we sinners surely should be willing to experience the same treatment from the world as the divine Saviour did. And yet we, none of us, are reviled, insulted, or made to suffer, as he was. Let us then pray for deliverance from the fear of man: and if we are falsely accused, let us wait for the Lord's coming, "who will bring to light the hidden things" of darkness, and make manifest the counsel of all hearts, "and then shall every faithful servant have praise of God." Let us boldly profess and plainly declare his truth, without regard to consequences. And even if we should be called to seal our testimony with our blood, we should fear apostacy far more than the most agonizing tortures; for, man can only kill the body, and cannot hurt the soul; but the Lord is able to destroy both body and soul in hell, and "if any man draw back, he will have no pleasure in him:" and he only, "who endureth unto the end, shall be saved." The Saviour is likewise able to support and comfort us under the sharpest sufferings, and to protect us in the extremest perils; and without Him, the believer's Father and Friend, who hath loved him with an everlasting love, the most trivial event cannot take place. Let us then boldly confess Christ, and simply obey him before men; assured that he will own us poor sinners as his brethren before his Father's throne. But we be to him, that are ashamed of him and his words among their fellow creatures, or deny him before his enemies: for Christ will deny them at that solemn season, when eternal happiness or misery will be awarded by his omnipotent word.

should come, or do we look for another?'

4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:

5 The ^a blind receive their sight, ^b and the lame walk; ^c the lepers are cleansed, ^d and the deaf hear; ^e the dead are raised up, ^f and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.

VI 11-16 22. John xi. 43, 44. — m v 3. Ps. xxii. 26. lxxii. 12, 13. Luke i-3.

V. 34-42.

How desperate must be the enmity of the carnal heart against God, when the Gospel of grace and peace excites, in those to whom it is proposed, the most rancorous malice, dissolving all the bonds of relative and social life, and prompting to the most unnatural murders and massacres! and when the most excellent and beneficent of the human race, who deserve to be universally revered and loved, become the objects of general contempt and hatred! To this day, the zealous believer's most inveterate foes are often "those of his own household." We should, however, remember, that we also are "by nature children" of wrath, even as others;" and if we now love the truth, the cause and the servants of Christ, all the praise is due to him who "hath made us to differ" by his special grace. This consideration should teach us to bear our cross patiently and meekly, and to pity and pray for our deluded adversaries. No personal or relative regards must interfere with our love to the divine Saviour, or with any requisite expressions of it; for he will not endure a rival in our hearts. And let us ask ourselves, Can father or mother, son or daughter, do us the service at that awful period which he can? Have they done so much to deserve our love? Or, are they so worthy of it? Surely our own hearts will declare us unworthy of him, if we prefer any earthly object to him! Surely we ought to be willing to bear our cross, and even be crucified for him, as he was for our sins! How then can we expect to be counted worthy of his friendship, if we refuse to bear our lighter tribulations for his sake? And doubtless he is able to compensate all our losses for his cause; inasmuch, that if we lose our lives by cleaving to him, we shall never perish, but have eternal life and felicity, as his most gracious recompense. Let us then abide in him, and show our love to him by kindness to his people and ministers, welcoming their message, and esteeming them very highly in love for their work's sake; satisfied that nothing which we do, from such principles, to the least of his disciples, shall fail of a proportionable and most liberal reward. (*Marg. Ref.*)

NOTES.

CHAP. XI. V. 1. This verse should have been annexed to the close of the preceding chapter, as it relates to the same subject; for the events afterwards recorded seem to have occurred at a different time. When the apostles were gone forth, our Lord did not remit his labour, but continued to go from place to place, to instruct the people.

v. 9-12. Ps. i.
 1. 2. xxviii. 1, 2.
 cxxx. 1. Luke
 22. 27.
 o. xlii. 55-57. xv.
 12-14. xviii. 7.
 xlix. 10. xxvi.
 31. 15. xlii. 14.
 15. Luke ii. 34.
 11. 23-29. John
 vi. 69. c1. 66.
 vii. 41. 42. Rom.
 ix. 32. 33. 1 Cor.
 1. 23. 1. 14. Gal.
 1. 1. 1 Pet. i. 8.
 2. Luke vii. 24-
 30.
 q. 10. 1-3. 5. xli.
 25. Mark i. 3.
 5. Luke iii. 3.
 7. John. 11. John
 i. 30. v. 35.
 r. Gen. xlix. 4. 2 Cor. i. 17. 18. Eph. iv. 14. Jam. i. 6. — c. xlii. 4. 2 Kings i. 8. Is. xx.
 2. Zech. xlii. 4. 1 Cor. iv. 11. 2 Cor. xi. 27. Rev. xi. 3. — 1. 13. 14. xiv. 9. xvii. 12, 13.
 xvi. 24-26. Mark ix. 11-13. Luke i. 15-17. 75.

6 And "blessed is he, ° whosoever shall not be offended in me.

7 ¶ And as they departed, ° Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, ° What went ye out into the wilderness to see? ° A reed shaken with the wind?

8 But what went ye out for to see? ° A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.

9 But what went ye out for to see? ° A

prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.

10 For this is he, ° of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

11 Verily I say unto you. Among them that are ° born of women, there hath not risen ° a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, ° he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is ° greater than he.

u. iii. 3. 4. xl. 3.
 Mal. iii. i. iv. 5.
 Mark i. 2. Luke
 vi. 26. 27. John
 23.
 x. lxxiv. 1. 4.
 x. lxxiv. 1. 4.
 1. 5. Eph. ii. 1.
 x. lxxiv. 1. 4.
 1. 20. Luke i.
 15. vii. 2. John
 v. 35.
 x. v. 19. Is. xxx.
 26. Zech. xli. 7.
 Luke ix. 40.
 1 Cor. vi. 4. 5.
 9. Eph. ii. 1.
 John vii. 29. 8.
 1. Rom. xxi. 4.
 23. 29. Col. i.
 23. 29. 2 Tim.
 1. 16. Heb. xii.
 20. 1 Pet. i. 10.

V. 2-6. John had lain a considerable time in prison: and some think that his faith in Jesus as the Messiah was something staggered; seeing he took no notice of him, used no means to deliver him, and did not so much as *openly* avow himself to be the Messiah. But this is not at all likely. It is, however, evident, that John's disciples were not in general so fully satisfied concerning Jesus: they were jealous for their master's honour, and did not clearly apprehend the nature of the Messiah's kingdom; they objected to the unreserved and social manner in which Christ and his disciples lived; and they were very backward to acknowledge him: and John seems to have intended to procure them some decisive testimony from Christ himself, which might terminate their hesitation. Hearing therefore the report of his miracles, he sent two of his disciples to him, to inquire whether he was the Messiah, or not? This was the purport of the question. The words translated, "He that should come," literally mean, *He that cometh, or is coming*. "This was in those days the common style for the Messias. So he is styled by John himself. "He that cometh after me?" (iii. 11;) "so by the multitude: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the "Lord: (xxi. 9;) "or the "King that cometh." (Luke xix. 38.) (*Whitby*.) The question therefore shows, that they were decided in the opinion that their Messiah was at hand; and that if Jesus were not He, another was immediately to be expected: yet almost eighteen hundred years have now elapsed, and no other is come, the Jews themselves being judges: how then can they evade the inference, that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the promised Messiah? To the question, however, thus proposed, our Lord answered rather by actions than by words: probably, lest an explicit reply should give his enemies a handle against him. He therefore wrought many miracles in the presence of John's messengers; and ordered them to report to him what they had witnessed, as well as what they had heard; and especially to show him, that the poor and lowly had the Gospel preached to them: they were evangelized and received it, whilst the rich, learned, and powerful, rejected Christ and his doctrine. This exactly accorded to the prophecies concerning the Messiah; but was contrary to the conduct of deceivers, who, out of carnal policy, generally address themselves to the great and powerful. John had wrought no miracle: and this rendered Christ's miracles the more decisive evidence; especially as they were predicted by that very prophet, who also foretold John's preparatory ministry; the contempt, opposition, and ill

usage, that the Messiah would meet with, and his humiliation, sufferings, and death. All these considerations tend to show the wisdom and propriety of our Lord's answer. He added, "Blessed is he who shall not be "offended in me." The prejudices of the people against a poor, afflicted, and suffering Messiah were so strong, and his doctrine and manner of life were so contrary to those of the Scribes and Pharisees; that most of them would be stumbled by what they saw and heard, and be induced to reject him, notwithstanding John's testimony, ancient prophecies, his own miracles, and the abundant evidence which he gave of his divine authority: yet they only would be happy, who should overcome all these prejudices, and receive him as the Messiah. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 7-11. John came as Christ's fore-runner, and vast multitudes attended his ministry and received his baptism; yet very few gave due attention to the grand object of his preaching. His testimony was therefore of vast importance with those who regarded him as a prophet; and our Lord's demand, or inquiry, was suited to excite them to attentive consideration. Surely they had not gone into the wilderness merely to see the reeds and rushes shaken by the wind; or to hear a man preach, who was as easily shaken as they by every gust of rumour, or prejudice, or every change of outward circumstances! John was a man of a very different spirit: he had acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, and he still persisted in his testimony; why then did they not regard him? They had indeed gone forth in great numbers, as men throng to gaze on a royal procession; but they could not expect to see, in a desert, a man clothed in soft, or delicate and sumptuous raiment. Such persons were rather found in kings' palaces; and they knew John to be a plain rough man, meanly clad, and mortified to all these vanities. What then was their object? They would doubtless answer, They went out to see and hear a prophet sent from God to instruct and reform them; and John was a prophet, and more than a prophet, being the very person of whom Malachi had prophesied. In the passage referred to, the Lord, speaking of the coming of Christ, says, "my face," and "before me:" but it is here quoted, as the language of the Father to the Son; and he therefore says, "before thy face," and, "thy way before thee:" so that to prepare the way of Christ, was to prepare the way of the Lord, as He and the Father are One. Our Lord added, that of all born of women, there had not risen a greater than John Baptist; (that is, of all mere men:) not one more holy, zealous, faithful

12 And ¹ from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven ² suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

13 For ³ all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

14 And ⁴ if ye will receive it, ⁵ this is Elias which was for to come.

15 He ⁶ that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

16 ¶ But ⁷ whereunto shall I liken ⁸ this generation? ⁹ It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,

17 And saying, ¹⁰ We have ¹¹ piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

18 For ¹² John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ¹³ He hath ¹⁴ a devil.

19 The Son of man ¹⁵ came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber. ¹⁶ A friend of publicans and sinners: ¹⁷ but wisdom is justified of her children.

20 ¶ Then ¹⁸ began he to ¹⁹ upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, ²⁰ because they repented not:

21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! ²² woe unto thee, Bethsaida! ²³ for if the mighty works which were done in thee, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, and thy cities would not have been desolate.

and humble; not one that was employed in a more high and honourable service; not one that had been favoured with clearer views of evangelical truth; not one who had been thus distinguished by being himself the subject of prophecy. And yet the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than he. The least of the apostles, or New Testament prophets, who were called to establish the Messiah's kingdom, would be further enlightened in the knowledge of his person, obedience, atonement, and mediation, and be employed in a more distinguished service, and more abundantly endued with the Holy Spirit, than John had been, and possess miraculous powers, which John did not. If we extend the passage to all faithful ministers of the Gospel, or to all true believers, as many do, it can only relate to the superior excellency of the new dispensation, and the more distinct views of the nature and glory of the Gospel, with which they are favoured: for, in respect of personal excellence and usefulness, few believers or ministers have been found greater than John. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 12. With the ministry of John, the New Testament dispensation began to be introduced, and the kingdom of heaven to be preached: and whilst the careless, the formal, the moral, and the learned, disregarded it, persons of the vilest characters, (who might previously have rather been expected violently to plunder men's houses,) with great earnestness sought admission into Messiah's kingdom: so that it seemed to suffer violence, and the violent seized it by force: and they who were supposed not to have the least right to these blessings, obtained possession of them; while the Scribes, Pharisees, priests, and rulers, who considered them as their own unalienable inheritance, were excluded, and the publicans and harlots entered before them.

V. 12—15. All the prophets, and Moses in the law, both by types and express predictions, foretold the coming of the Messiah as a future event; but John declared him to be at hand, and even pointed him out as already come. And if the people would receive and believe this open declaration, John was indeed the very person, who had been predicted under the name of Elijah, as sent to prepare the way for the Messiah. This information highly concerned all men; and every one, who was capable of

hearing, was bound to listen to it, as a truth immediately connected with his duty and happiness. (*Marg. Ref.*) This seems the obvious meaning of the concluding sentence, which is often repeated: and the limitation of it, to those who have 'an inward hearing ear,' (*Bp. Hall*), is suited completely to prevent the effect which is most evidently intended.

V. 16—19. Our Lord next exposed the perverseness of the Jews by an apt similitude. They resembled sullen children, who, being out of temper, quarrel with all the attempts of their fellows to please them, or induce them to join in those diversions for which they met in the market places. Their companions aimed to engage them by piping a cheerful tune; but they peevishly refused to dance to it: and if they represented a more doleful scene, and imitated the mournful strains used at the houses of the dead, they refused to lament. Such a capricious and sullen disposition is often observed in children, and thought deserving of sharp rebukes and corrections; yet in a matter of infinite importance, the people of that generation copied it! The Lord employed different means to bring them to repentance, and to prepare them for the blessings of the Gospel; but they opposed and objected to all. John Baptist came in a very abstemious and austere manner, as a mortified recluse, who would not join in their feasts; and they said, he was melancholy, lunatic, and possessed with a devil. The Son of man, (the Messiah, the most honourable of the sons of men,) came in a more free and social manner. He ate and drank such things as were set before him, without any peculiar austerity; and he partook of their entertainments, as circumstances required: yet, instead of being pleased by his condescending, courteous, and social demeanour, they, with a mixture of malevolence and absurdity, called him a glutton and a wine-bibber: and because he went among publicans and notorious sinners, to reform them, they accused him of loving their characters and company. But the divine wisdom displayed in these appointments, and in all others, would be perceived, approved, and adored, by the children of wisdom; that is, by all who are born and taught of God, and thus made wise unto eternal salvation.

x Mart. vi 45 viii
22 Luke ix 10
23 Luke ix 11
y xli 41, 42. Ez.
xli. 6, 7. Acts
xiii. 41. 45
xxvii. 1-2
z Job vi. 6 Jon
ii 5-10
a 2. Luke x 14
xli 17, 18. Heb.
i. 1 vi 4 8.
c 26-31
b Is xxvii Jer.
xv 22 xxvii
3. 8. xxvi-
xxvii. 10. Luke
13. Am. i. 9, 10
Zech. ix 2, 3
c. xli. 36. 2 Pet.
i. 11. 7
John iv 17
d iv. 13. viii. 5
xxvii. 10. Luke
xli 23 John iv.
46. ke.
e Is. xiv. 13-15
Lam. ii 1 Ez.
xxvii 12-19
xxvii 16, 17. Ob.
xxvii 16. 11
2 Pet. ii 4 9.
2 Pet. ii 4 9.
f Gen. xii 13 xix 24-25. Ez. xvi 48-50 Jude 7 Rev. xi 8. — g x. 15. Lam. iv. 6.
Mark vi 11. Luke x 12

unto thee, ^a Bethsaida! ^y for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

22 But I say unto you, ^a It shall be more tolerable for ^b Tyre and Sidon at ^c the day of judgment, than for you.

23 And thou, ^d Capernaum, ^e which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done ^f in Sodom; it would have remained until this day.

24 But I say unto you, That it shall ^g be more tolerable for the land of Sodom

in the day of judgment, than for thee.

25 ¶ At that time ^h Jesus answered and said, ⁱ I thank thee, ^k O Father, ^l Lord of heaven and earth, ^m because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, ⁿ and hast revealed them unto babes.

26 Even so, Father: ^a for so it seemed good in thy sight.

27 All things ^o are delivered unto me of my Father: and ^p no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; ^q neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and ^{he} to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

Rom. ix 18. xi. 33-36. Eph. i. 9, 11. iii. 11. 2 Tim. i. 9. — o xxviii. 10. John iii 2. iv. 21-23. xlii 3 xvii 2. 1 Cor. xv 25-27. Eph. i. 20-23. Phil. i. 10. 11. Heb. ii 4. — 10. 1 Pet. ii. 22. — p Luke x 22. John x. 14. — q John i 18 vi 45. xiv. 6-9. xvii 2, 3, 6 25, 26. 1 John ii 23. v. 19, 20. 2 John 9.

h Luke x 21.
i 1 Chr. xlix 13.
j Ps. xlv. 1. John
xi 41. 2 Thess.
ii 13, 14.
k Gen. xiv. 19.
l 22. Deut. x 14.
m 15. 2 Kings xix.
n 15. Is. lxvi. 1.
o Dan. iv. 28.
p Acts xvii. 24.
q 1 xlii 11-16. Is.
v. 21. xxix 10.
r 14. 16. 19.
s Mark iv. 10-12.
t John vii. 48. 49.
u xli. 39-41. xli.
39-40. Rom.
xi 8-10. 1 Cor.
i 18-18. 11. 6-8.
2 Cor. iv 3-6.
v. xvi 17, xviii. 3.
x Acts. i. 1. Sam.
ii 18. 11. 4-21.
y Ps. viii. 2 Jer.
1. 5-7. Mark x.
14-16.
z Job xxviii. 12.
aa Rev. 10.
ab John iii 2.
ac Heb. ii 4.
ad vi 45. xiv. 6-9.
ae xvii 2, 3, 6 25, 26.
af 1 John ii 23. v. 19, 20. 2 John 9.

V. 20-24. Our Lord, having exposed the perverseness of the Jews in general, upbraided some of those cities in which he had wrought most of his miracles, because their inhabitants continued still impenitent. After having denounced a wo on Chorazin and Bethsaida, two cities in Galilee, to which he had frequently resorted, he declared, that if such miracles as they had witnessed, had been wrought in Tyre and Sidon, those wealthy, luxurious, commercial cities, whose destruction the prophets had repeatedly denounced, would long before have shown the most expressive signs of deep repentance and humiliation. We are not competent to solve every difficulty, or fully to understand the whole of this subject: it suffices, that Christ knew the hearts of the impenitent Jews to be more hardened in rebellion and enmity, and less susceptible of suitable impressions from his doctrine and miracles, than those of the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon would have been; and therefore their final condemnation would be proportionably more intolerable. And as to Capernaum, which was a prosperous city, where he had chiefly resided after his entrance upon his public ministry, it had been, as it were, exalted to heaven by extraordinary privileges: but these would only tend to sink the inhabitants deeper into hell; for if the mighty works, there performed, had been wrought in Sodom, it might have stood and prospered even to that day; and therefore the people of Capernaum must expect a heavier doom, at the day of judgment, than even the vile inhabitants of Sodom. (*Marg. Ref.*) It is probable, that many inhabitants of these favoured cities professed to believe in Christ, yet did not "repent, and do works meet for repentance;" and our Lord, by upbraiding them for not repenting, emphatically showed the inefficacy of an impenitent faith.

V. 25, 26. The sovereignty of God in vouchsafing more abundant means of instruction to one city or country, than to another which was better disposed to attend to them, might excite objections; to which perhaps Jesus answered, when he adored the divine conduct in another similar concern. He addressed the Father, as the Proprietor and Governor of the Universe, who doeth whatsoever

pleaseth him in heaven and earth: and he thanked him, or professed an entire acquiescence in his wisdom, equity, and goodness, which were worthy of all adoration and praise, in that he was pleased to conceal the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven from learned Scribes and the wise men of the nation, and at the same time to reveal them to the poor and unlearned; to men of weak capacities and mean education; to those who were despised for their ignorance and inexperience, but who were also simple, humble, and teachable, as children: This he had done, because it seemed good in his sight, for wise and gracious reasons, which he was not pleased to assign. God did not, by any *positive influence*, hide the proofs of Christ's mission from the wise and prudent: they had the Scriptures in their hands, they saw or heard of his miracles, and heard or might have heard his doctrine: but they were blinded by pride and carnal prejudices; and he was pleased to give them up to be judicially blinded, among other reasons, perhaps, in order that the success of the Gospel might evidently appear to be the effect of divine power, and not of human wisdom and sagacity. But there was a *positive influence* employed, in making known the truth to the minds of the apostles and disciples. "The wise and prudent," here, are not men truly and spiritually wise; but men possessed with carnal worldly wisdom, and with a swelling conceit of their proficiency in wisdom; both which indispose men to embrace true spiritual wisdom: and from these God is therefore said to have hid the wisdom of the Gospel, because he permitted them to continue in that self-conceit and worldly mindedness, which caused them to reject it, as not being agreeable to their inclinations and mistaken sentiments. The babes are those humble modest persons, who, having a low esteem of their own wisdom, give themselves up to the divine wisdom; and, being free from carnal and worldly affections, are fitted to embrace it when it is revealed! It being therefore suitable to the wisdom and good pleasure of God, who "resists the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble," to make known his will to persons so prepared to receive it, our Lord adds, "for so it seemed good in thy sight." (*Whitby.*) (*Note, v. 3*)

Is. xlv 20-25.
 Jer. i-3 John
 vi 37 vii 37
 Rom. xxi 17
 xxiii 4. Gen.
 iii 17-19 Job
 7 xiv 1 Ps xxxiii
 4 xxv 1-8. Act. xxi
 10. Rom. vii 22-23 Gal. v. 1-3
 13 xvi 7 13 xi 10 xxviii 12 xlviii 17 18 Jer. vi 16
 2 Thes. i 7 Heb. iv 11
 vii 24 xvi 5 John xiii 17 xxi 21-24 xv. 10-14 1 Cor. ix 21 2 Cor. x 5 1 Thes.
 ii 2 2 Thes. i 5 Heb. x 3 12-22 xxviii 30 Luke vi 45-48 xiii 25 x 35-
 42 John xiii 15 Acts iii 22, 23 vii 37 Eph. iv 20, 21 Phil. ii 5.

28 'Come unto me, * all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take " my yoke upon you, * and

learn of me : * for I am meek and lowly in heart : * and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For " my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

31 For " my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

V. 27. This verse contains a very remarkable declaration of our Lord's personal and mediatorial dignity. The Father had delivered all things into his hands, even all power, authority, and judgment, over all creatures. None knew him, as the Son of God, but the eternal Father; even as none knew the Father, but the Son: neither could any man truly know the Father, except as the Son revealed his nature and glory to him: for this was entirely committed to him as Mediator, in respect of the whole sinful race of men. This represents the Son as co-equal with the Father, and as incomprehensible; and it completely demonstrates, that they who reject the teaching of the Lord Jesus, as the Son of God, and do not depend on him to reveal the Father to them, cannot know any thing aright of that One, true, and living God, whom they profess to worship. 'There is no true knowledge of God, nor quietness of mind, 'but only in Christ Jesus alone.' (*Beza*.) All the worship therefore of the Jews, and of modern deists, and of all unbelievers, is in fact rendered to an imaginary deity; the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ being to them "the unknown God." (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 28-30. The divine Saviour, having thus declared his dignity and authority, invited all those that laboured and were heavy laden to come to him. In some sense this includes all men: for worldly men labour like slaves, and burden themselves with fruitless cares and disquietudes about increasing wealth, or acquiring honour and pre-eminence: the dissipated and sensual labour hard, and are heavy laden, in pursuing pleasures and diversions: the slave of Satan, and of his own lusts and passions, is the veriest drudge on earth; and if he attempt by his own strength to break loose, he labours in vain: the superstitious labour in the very fire, and are heavy laden with self-imposed burdens: the Jewish ceremonial caused the people much labour, and laid heavy burdens on them, compared with the Gospel: they who endeavour to establish their own righteousness, are equally burdened and wearied in vain: the convinced, trembling, broken-hearted sinner labours under great discouragement, and is heavy laden with guilt and terror: and the tempted and afflicted believer has his labours and burdens also. In short, every "heart knows its own bitterness;" but Christ invites all, who in any respect labour and are heavy laden, to come to him, for rest to their souls; though such as laboured under a deep sense of guilt, or were heavy laden with the burdens imposed on them by the Scribes and Pharisees, seem especially intended. Christ alone gives this invitation; prophets, apostles, and ministers, direct men to go to him; the Father speaking from heaven, and the Spirit speaking in the heart, concur in the same instruction. Men come to him, when, feeling their guilt misery, and inability to help themselves, and believing his love and power to help them, they seek to him in fervent prayer, and rely and wait on him for salvation. All who thus come to him,

receive rest as his gift: they are released from bondage and condemnation; are relieved from anxious cares, fears, and superstitions; and obtain peace, satisfaction, and comfort, in their hearts and consciences. But coming to Him, they must take his yoke upon them, and submit to his authority, as their Lord and Master: they must also learn of him, as their Teacher and Counsellor, all things relating to their acceptance, comfort, and obedience. To encourage them in this, He assures them, that he is meek and lowly in heart: some explain this of the lesson that he teaches, even imitation of his meekness and lowliness: and doubtless this is necessary, and tends to inward rest and peace; for the storms that rend the cedars on the lofty mountains leave the lilies unmolested in the lowly valleys. But it is rather to be understood of our Lord's character as a Teacher and Ruler: he does not govern with rigour, or treat his scholars with harshness; but he deals gently with them, bears with their ignorance and incapacity, condescends to their weakness and infirmity, rejects no willing scholar, and accepts the willing servant, notwithstanding all his numerous mistakes, defects, and incidental faults. In his school and service, therefore, men "find rest" to their souls," and there only. Nor need they fear his yoke: his commandments indeed are the same, for substance, with the moral law; but that law is holy, just, and good, and obedience tends to proportionable felicity: as it is put by the Saviour, as his yoke upon the believer, it is deprived of its condemning power; it is enforced by evangelical motives, encouragements, and promises of assistance and gracious recompense; it is made easy by love and divine consolations; and a correspondent disposition is wrought in the heart by regenerating grace. Indeed, this obedience requires self-denial, and exposes a man to difficulties in many cases; but all this is a hundred-fold compensated, even in this world, by inward peace and joy. So that Christ's yoke is easy and pleasant in itself, as well as when compared with the yoke of Satan, sin, superstition, or self-righteousness, some of which they who reject the yoke of the Redeemer must bear. Indeed, the burden of corrections, tribulations, temptations, and persecutions, to which Christ's service may expose us, would sink us, if we were left to ourselves; yet, being counterpoised with internal supports, it proves "light, and is but for a moment," and works out for us a far more exceeding and eternal "weight of glory." So that every way Christ's "yoke is easy, and his burden light." (*Marg. Ref.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-6.

Our divine Redeemer was unwearied in his arduous labour of love; surely then we "should not be weary of well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." The dispensations of Providence, in laying aside

CHAP. XII.

The disciples pluck ears of corn to eat, on the sabbath, 1. Christ vindicates them from the charge of breaking the sabbath, 3—8. He heals the withered hand, and shows it lawful to do good on the sabbath, 9—13. The Pharisees seek to kill him; he withdraws, yet works miracles, and

so fulfils a prophecy of Isaiah, 14—21. He casts out a devil from a dumb and blind man, 22, 23; confutes the charge of the Pharisees, of casting out devils by Beelzebub, 24—30; and shows the sin against the Holy Ghost to be unpardonable, and that every idle word must be accounted for, 31—37. He rebukes those who sought a sign, and will give none but

and removing eminent ministers, at the very time when we should suppose they were peculiarly wanted, appear very mysterious: but he will not permit any servant in the least to interfere with the glory of his beloved Son: and he will show all men, that, though he may please to employ them to carry on his designs, he can do without them.—Patience in a prison, or a sick room, glorifies God, as well as the most active services; but when we cannot do what we would, we should still attempt, as we can, to direct the judgments and confirm the faith of those, who regard our words: and Christ will surely and greatly honour those, who thus humbly serve and honour him. What multitudes in these lands allow that the Saviour is already come, and that they look for no other; yet, alas! how few accept of his salvation, and bow to the sceptre of his grace!—Those things, which men see and hear, if compared diligently with the Scriptures, would direct them to the true religion, and determine in what way salvation is to be found. Though outward miracles are no longer wrought, yet the effects produced, where the Gospel is faithfully preached to the poor, in opening their eyes, directing their walk, delivering them from their sins and from the power of Satan, and teaching them to lead a spiritual and holy life, abundantly prove, that it is the power of God to the salvation of those that believe: and the contempt with which the rich, the proud, the worldly wise, and the self-righteous, regard this doctrine and these effects, forms an additional demonstration of the truth of the Scripture; for is it not written, that “the preaching of the cross is foolishness to them that perish?” But men are as apt to be offended with the doctrines, and preachers, and professors, of the Gospel now, as they were formerly with the lowly estate of the Redeemer: their proud and carnal prejudices are contradicted by them, and they are glad of any pretext for rejecting what they hate. Happy then is that man, whatever his past character was, or present circumstances are, who neither stumbles at any of these things, nor yet at the call to submission, repentance, self-denial, and unreserved obedience; but, notwithstanding all, cordially believes and embraces the Gospel.

V. 7—15.

Alas, how poor an account can many give of what they go to see, or hear, when they frequent places of worship, or even throng to attend on faithful preachers! They go to satisfy their curiosity, or to trifle away their time; but instead of resorting together to see the shaking of a reed, or a man clothed in soft raiment, they often mean rather to exhibit their own elegant and fashionable ap-

parel, and to compare it with that of their neighbours!—For soft raiment is not at present confined to the palaces of kings; but all endeavour to wear it, whether they can or cannot afford it; and far more of it appears in worshipping assemblies, than consists with the Scriptural precepts, with the glory of God, the interests of families, the good of the poor, or the prosperity of souls. The Lord, however, will call some to account for their motives in going to hear the word, as well as others concerning their reasons for absenting themselves. We should therefore attend, in order to hear the messengers of the Lord, who come to prepare the way, that his kingdom may be set up in our hearts; and as in some respects the least of faithful ministers, who now preach the Gospel, is greater than all who came before the introduction of that dispensation, it behooves us to “give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.” Considering our superior light and information, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness!

In every age the kingdom of heaven “suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.” The vilest transgressors, who strive to enter in at the strait gate, who wrestle in prayer, and are in earnest about their souls, out-strip their more moral and decent neighbours, who are supine, dilatory, and lukewarm. They who are determined at all adventures to find admission, will surely succeed; but such as postpone the concerns of their souls for worldly interest, pleasures, and diversion, will be found to come short of it; as well as those, who seek salvation in any other way than by repentance towards God, and faith in his beloved Son. To him, both “Moses, and all the prophets,” and John Baptist, and all the apostles and evangelists, “bear witness, that whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.” This we must attest, whether men will receive it or no; and call on all, who have ears to hear, seriously to attend to it.

V. 16—24.

Natural depravity causes even sensible men to act with childish folly, in the most important concerns of their immortal souls. Their cavils are often at the same time most futile and most malignant; their dislike to the message of Christ dictates objections to the messengers; something they have to urge against every one, however excellent and holy. Being determined to be displeased, they put a bad construction on their best actions: their self-denial and abstraction from the world arise from an ancholy or misanthropy; their cheerfulness from le-

that of Jonah, 33—40. The Ninivites and the queen of the south, will condemn that generation, 41. 42. By a parable he shows their awful state, 43—45. His disciples are his most endeared relations, 46—50.

a Mark ii 23—26.
Luke vi 1—5.

AT that time Jesus ^a went on the sabbath-day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began

vity; their benevolent sociableness from intemperance or love of good cheer; their endeavours to reform the profligate are ascribed to a congeniality of disposition, and to dislike of morality and goodness; their different natural tempers, or methods of doing good, are but varied modes of mischief: and, in short, men will censure any thing or every thing, in order to excuse themselves from joining the servants of Christ in mourning for sin, or in seeking happiness from God. In vain can we hope to escape the perverse and unreasonable calumnies of such men, as said that John Baptist was a demoniac, and the Holy One of God “a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend and companion of publicans and sinners.” These are the children of unbelief and folly: but wisdom’s children welcome the messengers of God, and bless him for them, and for their different gifts and endowments; and they will admire and adore the divine wisdom, even in those things, at which ungodly men cavil to their own eternal ruin. Our blessed Lord will never upbraid the trembling penitent with any of his iniquities; but he will sharply rebuke and awfully condemn those, who continue impenitent under the means of grace. He knows the different degrees of enmity and obduracy, which possess the hearts of unbelievers, and will proportion their final punishment accordingly: but it will be far more tolerable for pagans in the day of judgment, than for wicked professors of Christianity. The Lord, in wise and righteous sovereignty, sends the Gospel to whom he pleases; yet he punishes none more than they deserve, and rejects none that seek teaching and salvation from him. But it behooves those, who have been exalted even to heaven with outward advantages, to fear lest they should sink the deeper into hell, through their abuse of them: and there can be no doubt, but that multitudes of the inhabitants of this favoured land will perish with deeper condemnation, than those of Tyre, or even than those of Sodom and Gomorrah.

V. 25—29.

Whilst the eternal Son, with all his holy angels, and his redeemed people, adore and praise the Father and Lord of all, for hiding the mysteries of redeeming love from the wise and prudent, and revealing them to the unlearned, and even to babes, because it so seemeth good in his sight, the proud and impenitent blaspheme his holy appointments, and treat such declarations with the most pointed scorn and detestation. Thus the wise and prudent of this world often illustrate and demonstrate the truth which they oppose: they show that nothing but divine teaching

to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. ^b But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, ^c Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath-day!

³ But he said unto them, ^d Have ye not read ^e what David did when he was an hungred, and they that were with him;

⁴ How he entered into the house of

b Deut xxiii 25.
c 10 Ex xii 16.
d 11 xxiii 10.
e 12 xxiii 17.
f 13 xxiii 26.
g 14 xxiii 36.
h 15 xxiii 37.
i 16 xxiii 38.
j 17 xxiii 39.
k 18 xxiii 40.
l 19 xxiii 41.
m 20 xxiii 42.
n 21 xxiii 43.
o 22 xxiii 44.
p 23 xxiii 45.
q 24 xxiii 46.
r 25 xxiii 47.
s 26 xxiii 48.
t 27 xxiii 49.
u 28 xxiii 50.
v 29 xxiii 51.

can make known divine things, in their nature and glory: and they evince the propriety of the Lord’s leaving them to be blinded by their prejudices; seeing their arrogance and enmity more than equal their superior knowledge and sagacity. But all things are given into the hands of our Redeemer: we cannot know either the Father or the Son, except by the teaching of the holy Word, and the Holy Spirit: we can know nothing of the one, apart from the other: and as none can know the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him, so he must know the most in this matter, who sits at Christ’s feet with the greatest docility and simplicity, to hear and believe his words. The Redeemer’s mercy and condescension equal his majesty; and he invites the labouring and burdened sinner to come to him for rest. Why then should any labour for that which is not bread, or seek rest from any other quarter? Let us come to him daily for deliverance from wrath and guilt, from sin and Satan, from all our cares, fears, and sorrows: let us learn of him as our Prophet, rely on him as our Priest, bear his yoke as our King, and copy his example of meekness and lowliness of heart. And whatever impiety or infidelity may object, whatever the world, the flesh, and the devil may suggest, we shall find his yoke easy and his burden light; his service perfect freedom and rest to our souls; and that in keeping his commandments there is great reward.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII. V. 1, 2. Matthew seems to fix the date of this transaction immediately *after* the events recorded in the preceding chapter; but the other evangelists record it in an earlier part of our Lord’s history. (*Marg. Ref.*)—The Jewish writers say, that it was not customary for the people to taste food till after the service at the synagogue: but this must be one of “the traditions of the elders;” for the Scripture never mentions it; nor is it, on this occasion, once hinted at. In going to the synagogue on the sabbath, or in returning from it, the disciples, being hungry, plucked the ears of corn, rubbed them in their hands, and ate. The law allowed them to take the produce of any man’s field, or vineyard, in this manner, as they passed through it. (*Note, Deut. xxiii. 24, 25.*) But the Pharisees, who, as has been very probably supposed, were deputed by the chief priests and rulers to watch the conduct of Jesus and his followers, condemned this action as a profanation of the sabbath; considering it as in some respects equivalent to reaping and threshing the grain, and intending to involve Jesus also in the same accusation.

† Ex xxx 9
Lev xxiv 5-9

God, and did eat 'the shew-bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?

g Num xxviii 9
10 John vii 22, 23

h Neh. xiii. 17

† 41, 42 2 Chr

vi 18 Hag ii

7-9 Mal iii 1

John ii 19 21

Eph ii 20-22

Col ii 9 1 Pet

ii 4 5

12, 13, 15 xlii 29

Acts xii. 27

11, 12-17 Hos.

vi 6 Mic vi 6

8.

m Job xxvii 3

21 Prov xvi

15 Jam v 6

nir 6 Mark ii

26 14 4-7

Luke vi 5 John

v 17-23 1 Cor

ix. 21 xvi 2

Rev. i 10

o Mark iii. 1-5

Luke vi 6-11.

5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that, ^a on the sabbath-days, the priests in the temple ^b profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

6 But I say unto you, ⁱ That in this place is one greater than the temple.

7 But ^k if ye had known what *this* meant, ^l I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have ^m condemned the guiltless.

8 For ⁿ the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

9 ¶ And when he was departed thence, ^o he went into their synagogue:

10 And, behold, there was a man ^p which had *his* hand withered. And they asked him, saying, ^q Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? ^r that they might accuse him.

11 And he said unto them, ^s What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, ^t and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?

12 How much then ^u is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore, ^x it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.

13 Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; ^y and it was restored whole like as the other.

p 1 Kings xlii 4

q 17 John vi 9

r xix 3 xlii 17

s 18 Luke xiv 3

t 6 xxi 22 John

v 10

u Luke vi 7 xli 54

x xlii 2 1 John

xii 6

y Luke xlii 15-

17 xiv 5

z xxi xlii 4, 5

Deut xlii 4

u vi 26 Luke xii

x xlii 2 1 John

xii 6

y Luke xlii 13

Acts iii 7, 8

V. 3, 4. In answering the charge of the Pharisees, our Lord first referred them to the conduct of David, when he fled from Saul; intimating, that they were very deficient in the knowledge of the Scriptures, though they prided themselves on their learning in this respect, and despised the common people. They allowed that David was a prophet, and the man after God's own heart: yet in circumstances of urgent necessity, he scrupled not to infringe the injunction of the ritual law, by eating the shew-bread and giving it to his attendants; though the law required that none but the priests should eat of it. (*Marg. Ref.*) He had indeed been blamed, and had condemned himself, for other parts of his conduct: yet this was never deemed criminal; the necessity of the case being allowed as a sufficient reason for dispensing with a ceremonial institution. Why then should the disciples be condemned, even if they had deviated from the exact letter of the law, to satisfy the cravings of their hunger? (*Note, Exod. xx. 8-11.*)—'It is a small thing to say, It is lawful for us to eat the bread removed from the table; it would be lawful for us, in this extreme hunger, even to eat the bread now sanctified on the table, if there were no other.' (*Kimhi in Whitby.*)

V. 5, 6. Our Lord next showed them, that in some cases, the exact rest of the sabbath must be dispensed with, or other ritual observances must be neglected: for the priests at the temple performed a great deal of labour on the sabbath, in preparing the sacrifices, and tending the fire on the altar; which work, being done by others, or in another place, would certainly have been a violation of the law: yet they were allowed to be blameless in what they did. And whether the Pharisees would regard it or not, there was before them One greater than the temple, even the true Temple, "in which the fulness of God dwelleth bodily," (meaning his human nature; and therefore in attending and obeying Him, the strict rest of the sabbath might be dispensed with. (*Marg. Ref.*)—

* All that work, done by priests, was for the service of the temple: whereas the service done by the disciples to their Lord, was to one much greater than the temple, both in respect of dignity, as being a divine person.

'and, as being sanctified even in his human nature, by inhabitation of the Spirit, and of the fulness of the God-head in him.' (*Whitby.*)

V. 7, 8. The passage here referred to, has been before considered. (*Note, Hos. vi. 6.*) Had the Pharisees understood what was meant, when God declared, that he required mercy rather than sacrifice, "they would not have condemned the guiltless:" for, relieving the disciples' hunger, in subserviency to their attendance on Jesus in his labours of love, was an act of mercy sufficient to justify so trivial a deviation from the exact rest of the sabbath. And in conclusion he added, "The Son of Man was Lord even of the sabbath:" He, the Messiah, was Lord and Ruler of his Church in this and every other particular. Thus he intimated that, as the Son of God, he had at first instituted the sabbath; that he gave the law from mount Sinai; and that he had lost none of his authority by his humiliation, but should make such alterations in the time and circumstances of observing this sacred rest, as it became him, the great Law-giver, in respect of his own institutions,—It cannot be supposed, that Christ would so frequently have discussed this subject, and shown what works were lawful on the sabbath-day, without allowing of any other exceptions; if the institution, for the substance of it, had not been intended to be continued in full force under the Christian dispensation.

V. 9-13. When Christ had silenced the Pharisees, he departed: and on another sabbath he entered into one of their synagogues; when the same subject was again brought forward. (*Marg. Ref.*) As a man whose hand was withered attended; the Pharisees, ever watching to find matter of accusation, asked our Lord, whether it was lawful to heal on the sabbath? This general question, as implying the consistency of the various labours and avocations attending cures by medicine, with hallowing the sabbath, was not without difficulty: for doubtless some things, generally practised in this respect, are works of necessity and mercy, and others might very well be postponed.—It seems, therefore, from the other evangelists, that Jesus answered by another and more simple question, "Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath-day?" He would

xxviii. 1. Mark
iii. 6. Luke vi.
11. John v. 19
N. 30. xv. 53. 57.
* Or. tope. cou-
set.

xi. 23. Luke vi.
12. John xxi. 1.
N. 40—52. xi. 54.
E. 1. 23. 25. xix.
2. Mark iii. 7—
12. vi. 56. Luke
vi. 17—14. John
ix. 4. Gal. ii. 9.
1 Pet. ii. 27.
1 IV. 30. xvi. 9.
Mark vi. 36.
Luke vi. 15. 16.
xix. 17. N. 55.
xxi. 4. 18. xii.
22. 23. N. 19.
John x. 24. Luke
xvi. 26. xxv. 41.
N. 35. 36. xxi.
28. xix. 28. Acts
xiii. 27.
o. 18. N. 11—4.
E. 18. xix. 5. 6. 11.
12. 13. 11. Zech.
8. E. Phil. ii. 6.
7.

E. Ps. lxxviii. 10.
11. N. 11. 1—3.
Luke xxi. 35.
1 Pet. ii. 4.
17. xlvii. 5. Mark
i. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

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14 ¶ Then the Pharisees ² went out, and * held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

15 But when Jesus knew it, ³ he withdrew himself from thence: ⁴ and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all;

16 And ⁵ charged them that they should not make him known:

17 That ⁶ it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Ezeias the prophet, ⁷ saying,

18 Behold ⁸ my servant, ⁹ whom I have chosen: ¹⁰ my Beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: ¹¹ I will put my Spirit upon him, ¹² and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.

19 He ¹³ shall not strive, nor cry; ¹⁴ neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

20 A ¹⁵ bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, ¹⁶ till he send forth judgment unto victory.

21 And ¹⁷ in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

22 ¶ Then ¹⁸ was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb: ¹⁹ and he healed him, inasmuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.

23 And all ²⁰ the people were amazed, and said, ²¹ Is not this the son of David?

24 But ²² when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by ²³ Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.

not, however, either be diverted from his purpose of mercy by their objections, nor yet give them that ground of accusation for which they sought; and therefore he asked them, whether any one of them, strict as they professed to be, if a single sheep should fall into a pit on the sabbath, would omit to pull it out, either from regard to the value of his property, or out of compassion to the animal? Yet this would be attended with labour, whilst his healing miracles were performed without any. But how much more valuable is a rational creature, possessed of an immortal soul, than a mere animal! And how much more requisite, according to the law of love, to bring immediate relief to the distresses of the one than the other! Wherefore it must be consistent with the divine law to perform those actions of mercy and love on the sabbath day, which were evidently good in themselves, and ornamental to piety. Having thus silenced them, he ordered the man to stretch forth his withered hand; and, by the power attending his word, the man found his hand immediately and perfectly restored.

V. 14—21. The Pharisees, not being able to answer our Lord's reasoning, and exasperated by being put to shame, as well as anxious for their authority and the credit of their traditions, took counsel together, by what means they might destroy him, or find some plausible accusation against him, that he might be condemned to death as a deceiver or blasphemer. But Jesus, aware of their design, (as his time was not yet come,) thought proper to retire from that place: yet, being followed by great multitudes of the people, he continued to heal all the sick that were brought to him, strictly charging them at the same time not to speak of his miracles, nor to let the Pharisees know where he was. (ix. 30.) Thus he evidently fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the Messiah. (Note. Is. xlii. 1—4.) The passage hath already been explained: but it may here be added, that the gentle, lowly, compassionate, condescending, and beneficent nature of Christ's miracles and personal ministry, devoid of ostentation and severity, and his perseverance in the midst of opposition,

without engaging in contentious disputation, as well as the general effects and success of his Gospel, and his kind and tender dealing with weak

xix. 4. Ps. cxxix. 2.
Jer. xvii. 10.
Am. ix. 10. Mark
ii. 6. John xi. 24.
Cor. xxi. 17.
1 Th. ii. 13. Heb.
ix. 13. Rev. ii. 23.
v. 16. x. 21. xix. 3.
28. Luke iii. 23—
28. Luke xi. 17.
18. Gal. v. 15.
Rev. xvi. 12.
2. John xii. 21. xix.
30. xvi. 11. 2 Cor.
v. 4. Col. i. 15. 1
John v. 19. Gr.
Rev. ix. 11. Heb. ix.
xvi. 10. xx. 2, 3.
3. Mark x. 35, 38.
Luke ix. 49, 50.
xi. 19. Acts
xix. 13—16.
b. 41, 42. Luke xii. 22. Rom. iii. 13.

25 And * Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand :

26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand ?

27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, a by whom do your children cast them out ? b therefore they shall be your judges.

28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

29 Or else, c how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man ? and then he will spoil his house.

30 He d that is not with me, is against me : and he that e gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.

31 Wherefore I say unto you, h All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be

c. 19. Mark xx. 17. Luke xi. 20. Acts 8. 39.
d. xxi. 31. 49. 15.
ix. 6. 7. Dan. ii.
4. vii. 14. Mark
i. 15. xi. 10.
Luke i. 32, 33.
ix. 2. x. 11. xxi.
16. xiv. 28, 21.
Rom. xiv. 17.
Col. i. 13. Heb.
xi. 23.
e. ix. xix. 24. lili.
12. Mark iii. 27.
Luke xi. 21, 22.
1 John iii. 8. iv.
4. Rev. xii. 7—
9. xx. 1—3. 9. 9.
f. xi. 24. Josh. v.
13. xiv. 15. 1.
Chr. xii. 17, 18.
M. 40.
Luke ix. 50. xi.
11. John xi. 52.

23. 2 Cor. vi. 15, 16. Rev. iii. 15. 46. — 2 Gen. xlix. 10. Hos. i. 11. John xi. 52. h. Is. i. 18. iv. 7. Ez. xxxiii. 11. 1 Tim. i. 13—15. 1 John i. 9. ii. 1, 2.

uncommon degree; and it led them to conclude that Jesus must be the Messiah, the Son of David; which exasperated the Pharisees, and made them fear, that he would finally prevail against them: yet they could not deny the reality of the miracle; and therefore they malignantly renewed their accusation, that he cast out devils, by the concurrence of Beelzebub the prince of the devils, with whom he had formed an alliance. (Note, ix. 32—34.) 'This they did, not only from an apprehension, that if this belief prevailed, it might bring the power of the Romans upon them, (John xi. 48:) but chiefly, because it put an end to their credit and authority over the people; they being still represented by our Lord, as blind guides, and the worst of hypocrites,' (Whitby.) The term, employed on this occasion, is very properly rendered "this fellow," as expressive of contempt and aversion. Beelzebub is the same as Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron in Philistia, (2 Kings i. 3.) The name signifies, the lord of a fly: but the Greek word here used is *Beelzebub*, which signifies the lord of a dunghill. 'The heathens fabulously write of the temple of Hercules and Jupiter, that the Deity kept the flies from them; the Jews say of their temple, that a fly was not seen in the slaughter-house.' (Whitby.) 'The god of the Ekronites was called *Baal-zebub*, either for the plenty of flies with which his temple abounded, or because they sought help from that idol, against the flies with which they were troubled. This name the Israelites after, for the contempt of that idol, gave to the prince of the devils. *Beelzebub*, signifies the god of dung.' (Leigh.) He is called Satan in our Lord's answer.

V. 25, 26. The Pharisees seem to have privately circulated this opinion; but Jesus knew their thoughts, and took occasion to argue the case with them. Probably, they grounded it on his disregard to their traditions, and his supposed violation of the sabbath; though they charged him with various other crimes; but he rested his argument on the evident tendency and effect of his doctrine and example, to render men wise and holy, to deliver them from the power of sin and Satan, and to make them servants and worshippers of God: inasmuch that as far as his cause prevailed, Satan's kingdom must be subverted. As therefore these fallen spirits are too politic and sagacious to assist in ruining their own cause; and as every kingdom or family, that is divided into parties contending against each other, must be weakened, desolated, and ruined: so it was evident, that if Satan aided Jesus in casting

out devils, the infernal kingdom was divided against itself; and how then could it any longer subsist? Nothing can be more conclusive than this argument.

V. 27, 28. It is plain that there were persons, who made it their business to expel evil spirits from possessed persons; (Acts xix. 13—16;) and that some of them were countenanced by the Pharisees. Now these exorcists might be left to determine the cause betwixt Jesus and his accusers: if they asserted that he cast out devils by the prince of the devils, they could not prove that their own children or disciples cast them out by any other power. And if they ascribed the exorcisms of these persons to the assistance of God, how could they doubt of his being the same when they were every way so vastly superior, and when his life and doctrine were so holy? And it was also undeniable, that if he by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then the Kingdom of God was come unto them. He was certainly the promised Messiah, and they who opposed or rejected him, would do it at their peril. 'You doubt not but your exorcists, who use the name of God, the God of Abraham, &c. do cast out devils by virtue of that name: it will then be matter of your condemnation, to pass such an unjust censure on me.' (Whitby.)—Christ uses this as an argument *ad homines*, that they who themselves professed to cast out devils by the God of Abraham, had no reason to say that he did it by the 'prince of devils.' (Hammond.)

V. 29, 30. The case might be illustrated by an apt similitude. How could any one enter into a strong man's house whilst he was upon his guard, and in defiance of him plunder his property at his pleasure; unless he first overpowered and bound the strong man? Thus it was evident, that Jesus by his divine power was able to subdue and limit the power of Satan; or he never could rescue the bodies and souls of men from his oppression, in the manner that he evidently did. And as he came to "destroy the works of the devil," so the cause would admit of no neutrality. Every one, who should refuse to join him against the cause of Satan, would be adjudged an enemy; and all that would not concur with him in collecting sinners from the devil's kingdom into that of God, whatever pains they might take in any other way, would do worse than lose their labour; for all their contrivances, knowledge, and religious observances, would tend to their own loss and that of others, and they would finally lose their own souls.

c 34.

things: ' and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things.

u De xii. 14
Rom. ii. 16
John v. 4-6
John 14. 15
Rev. xx. 12.

36 But I say unto you, That ^u every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

x Jam. iii. 21-25.

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

c xvi. 1-4 Mark
viii. 11
Luke xi. 16-20
John i. 12-14
48. 1 Cor. i. 22.

38 ¶ Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, ^y Master, we would see a sign from thee.

c Is viii. 3 Mark
xiii. 38, 39
xvi. 4. Luke xi.
29, 30.

39 But he answered and said unto them. An evil and ^z adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall ^a no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.

V. 33-37. (Notes, iii. 7. vii. 15-20.) Our Lord next showed the Pharisees his knowledge of the evil of their hearts. They were proud, carnal, malicious, ungodly men; yet they pretended to piety: let them therefore either seek the renewal of their souls to holiness by the grace of God, or let them give up their pretensions to religion. (Notes, Ec. xviii. 30-32.) If the tree were made good, good fruit would be produced; otherwise they might as well allow the tree to be corrupt, of which the fruit was notoriously bad; seeing the tree is known, not by its appearance, leaves, or blossoms, but by its fruit. Thus they were detected by their malignant opposition to his holy character and doctrine, and to his beneficent miracles. Indeed, their words sufficiently determined the state of their hearts, and showed them to be a generation of vipers, the progeny of the old serpent: how then could they speak good and holy things habitually and consistently? For out of the abundance of the thoughts and desires of the heart, the mouth naturally speaks. If a man be humble, pious, spiritual, a lover of God and man, his memory, judgment, and affections, become a treasury of good things, from which he brings forth edifying conversation, pious observations, candid opinions, equitable decisions, and whatever can conduce to the glory of God and the good of mankind. But wicked men have within them a treasury of pride, malice, impiety, and selfishness, from which they naturally educe evil things: nor can they help, at times, venting their malice, arrogance, envy, or enmity, against true religion, and speaking boasting, reproachful, and injurious language. Thus the Pharisees betrayed themselves; and however they might deem this a light matter, yet Christ assured them, that every idle or useless word, which in no way tended to their own or others comfort or benefit, or to the glory of God, (the great ends for which man is endued with the gift of speech;) much more all pernicious, polluting, and impious words, must be given an account of at the day of judgment: and at that solemn season, they will be deemed decisive evidences of a man's character and the state of his heart; according to which a person professing religion will be justified as a true believer, or condemned as a hypocrite; and all men will be adjudged pious or impious, holy or

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40 For ^b as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly: ^c so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights ^d in the heart of the earth.

b Jon. i. 17.

xxvi. 21 xxvii. 22
xxxvii. 40 G3, 41
John ii. 19.
3 Ps. i. iii. 9 Jon
ii. 2-5
e Luke xi. 32.
f 32. 14 Hx. 15
Jer. vi. 11. Ez.
xvi. 51.
Rom. vi. 27
Heb. xi. 7
g 2 Cor. xvi. 4
xviii. 17. xxviii. 22
h Jon. iii. 5-10.
i 6. 42 John ii.
21. iv. 12. xiii.
53-58. Heb. xii.
5, 6.
j 1 Kings vi. 1.
8. 2 Chr. i. 13.
13c Luke xi. 31.
Acts viii. 27, 28
1 Kings iii. 9
12. 28. iv. 22
3. 12 x. 4
7. 21.
m iii. 17. xxv. 5
Is vii. 14. xli. 6
7. John i. 14
10. ii. 11, 6. 7
Heb. i. 2-4.

41 The ^e men of Nineveh shall ^f rise in judgment with ^g this generation, and shall condemn it: ^h because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, ⁱ behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

42 The ^k queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to ^l hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, ^m behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

unholy, as their habitual conversation hath been. (Marg. Ref.)—Discourse tending to innocent mirth, to exhilarate the spirits, is not *idle discourse*; as the time spent 'in necessary recreation is not *idle time*.' (Doddridge.)

V. 38-40. The Scribes and Pharisees, persisting in their enmity after all the miracles which they had witnessed, were dissatisfied with the evidences of our Lord's divine mission, and desired a sign from heaven; perhaps meaning some such tremendous displays of the divine glory as their fathers had seen on mount Sinai. To this he answered, that they were a wicked and adulterous generation of Israel, and unfaithful to their covenant with God; and, hating the truth, they purposed to cloak their enmity under this unreasonable and presumptuous request: but no sign should be given them, except that of Jonah, who, having remained three days in the whale's belly, was brought forth alive by the power of God to preach to the Ninevites. In like manner, He, the Son of man, being slain and buried in a sepulchre hewn out of a rock, and covered with a great stone, as if in the heart of the earth, would be brought forth alive after *three days, or on the third day*, (Note, 1 Sam. xxx. 11-15:) for so the phrase here used signifies, according to the manner of speaking in use amongst the Jews. Then he would be proved to be alive by many infallible demonstrations; and they that would not receive him for the Messiah, would be left to final unbelief and destruction. 'It is a received rule among the Jews, that a part of a day is put for the whole; so that whatsoever is done in any part of the day, is properly said to be done that day. (1 Kings xx. 29. Esth. iv. 16. "When eight days were accomplished for the circumcision of the child, &c.")—yet the day of his birth and of his circumcision were two of these eight days. Since, then, our Saviour was in the grave all Friday night and Saturday, seeing he was in the grave all Saturday night, and part of the morning of the day following,—he may, according to the Hebrew computation, be truly said to have been "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Whitby.)

V. 41, 42. The Ninevites had repented at the preaching of Jonah, though he wrought no miracles, and his conduct in many things might have tended to prejudice

n. Luke xi. 24. 43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

1 Pet. v. 8. 44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.

45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

46 ¶ While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.

people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.

47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

49 And he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, sister, and mother.

51 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, sister, and mother.

them, and though he gave them little instruction or encouragement to repent. They would therefore rise up in judgment with that generation of Israel to whom Christ came, and condemn them; their repentance in such unfavourable circumstances would expose the aggravated guilt of the Jews, in continuing impenitent, amidst all the miracles, instructions, warnings, and invitations of Christ, attended by his most holy example: for, behold, it was most evident that a far more eminent and excellent person than Jonah was in the midst of them!—In like manner the queen of Sheba would appear against them, to their deeper condemnation; for she came from a remote region to learn heavenly wisdom from Solomon: whereas they had a greater and a more excellent person in the midst of them than Solomon was: and he went from place to place to instruct them, without their own labour or expense; yet they rejected him, and sinned in contempt of his instructions! There is vast dignity and propriety, in this declaration of Christ concerning himself, when we consider him as the incarnate Son of God; but on the supposition of his being a mere man, the words would impress the mind in a very different manner. (*Marg. Ref.*)—God—having promised to Solomon such wisdom, that, as there was none like him before, so should there after arise none like unto him, (1 Kings iii. 13;) he that was greater than Solomon must be more than a man. (*Whitby.*)

V. 43—45. Our Lord next describes the danger of the unbelieving Jews under a parable, formed upon the case of a demoniac. He supposes the evil spirit, (called *unclean*, because all sin is *uncleanness* in the judgment of a holy God,) to quit possession of the man, lest he should be violently expelled. Yet he does this greatly against his will; and, as he cannot obtain permission to possess any other person, he wanders about disconsolate, in dry or desert places, seeking rest, and finding none. At length therefore he attempts to recover possession of the man from whom he had departed; and on his return he finds his former dwelling empty, (without any possessor to oppose his entrance,) “swept and garnished,” or ready prepared for his reception: on this discovery he goes, and fetches seven, or several other, evil spirits, more malignant

than himself, (for even some devils are worse than others;) and they take up their abode in the man, and the possession becomes more dreadful and incurable than ever: thus our Lord declared it would be with that generation. The powers of darkness, disturbed by the doctrine and miracles of Christ and his apostles, as well as by the ministry of John Baptist, would for a time recede from the Jews, and seek rest among the Gentiles, in those dry lands where no water of life had hitherto been found. (*Marg. Ref.*) But being pursued by the faithful and successful preaching of the Gospel, and finding no rest there, they would return to repossess that unbelieving generation of Jews: and, meeting with no opposition, more evil spirits, and those more malignant than formerly, would take possession of them, and they would become more hardened than before the preaching of the kingdom of heaven among them. In this view it is a prophecy of the rejection of the Jews, and their awful state of enmity to the Gospel to this day.—But it is also applicable to the case of individuals, who hear the word of God, are convinced of its truth, and in part reformed, but not truly converted: the unclean spirit indeed retires, but Christ is not admitted to “dwell in the heart by faith.” The evil spirit hankers after his old abode, and waits his opportunity of returning: on examination he finds his habitation empty, swept from convictions and serious impressions, and garnished, or ready furnished, for the reception and entertainment of unclean spirits, by a preparation of heart to comply with their suggestions. Thus, instead of one spirit, seven take up their abode in the man, and his last state becomes worse than the first: he becomes perhaps a more decent, plausible, or presumptuous enemy of God; but sevenfold more callous and inveterate than before. This was doubtless the case with vast numbers, who had heard John Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles, with attention, but who afterwards relapsed into wickedness: and it is the case of many, in all places where the Gospel is faithfully preached. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 46—50. It appears from the other Evangelists, that the earnestness and assiduity of Christ in teaching the people, notwithstanding the opposition of the Pharisees, gave disquietude to his friends and brethren, or near re-

CHAP. XIII.

The parable of the sower, 1—9. The reason why Jesus taught by parables, 10—17. The parable explained, 18—23.

lations, (perhaps the children of Joseph by a former wife,) or his cousins, some of whom did not believe in him. (*Marg. Ref.*) They wanted him to desist, supposing that he exceeded the bounds of prudence; and they seem to have engaged Mary to concur in the design; which was doubtless reprehensible, as it implied sentiments of him, derogatory to his perfect wisdom and excellence. They therefore came when he was teaching the people, and not being able to approach him for the multitude, they sent to desire to speak with him. But Jesus was aware of their intention, and he therefore answered, by inquiring, Who his mother and brethren were? Intimating, that even they had no right to interfere, nor any authority over him, in respect of his important work; that his spiritual affection to his disciples was greater than any natural affection which he bore to his relations; that his love to men's souls had the greatest influence over him; that even his mother was nearer to him as a true believer, than on account of her natural relation; and that his brethren would have no advantage from him, if not believers also. He therefore stretched forth his hands over his disciples, as expressing his cordial and endeared affection for them; and declared that they were his mother and brethren; that he bore them all the regard due to those near relations; and that he would honour and provide for them, even as a dutiful son would behave towards his beloved parent, or one brother to another, when advanced to superior circumstances. And not only would he admit those present to such high and valuable privileges; but whosoever, of any age or nation, should do the will of his heavenly Father, by hearing, believing, and obeying him as his Saviour, would, in life, death, judgment, and for ever, be honoured and blessed, even as the brother, sister, or mother of him, the Lord of all, and the King of glory. (*Noë, vii. 21—23.*) (*Marg. Ref.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—13.

They who follow Christ, must be ready, when called to it, to endure hunger, or submit to mean fare; and to be reproached and falsely accused for their close attendance on him and his ordinances; but they should leave the Lord to plead in their behalf, and he will do it effectually. Such professed Christians, as are most destitute of the power of godliness, are often most tenacious of forms even to a scrupulous minuteness; especially when they can make use of them to support their credit or authority, to cloak their iniquity, or to oppose the upright servants of the Lord. Many of this description seem never to have read the Scriptures: for they severely censure, in living disciples, the very things for which holy men of old were never blamed: and at the same time they profess to hold the latter in high estimation; because they have the sanction of general opinion, are no longer the subjects of envy or

The parable of the tares, 24—30; the grain of mustard-seed, 31, 32; the leaven, 33. The scripture fulfilled in Christ's teaching by parables, 34, 35. That of the tares explained, 36—43.

competition, and give them no opposition or uneasiness in their ungedly practices. They will also condemn those things in persons of another party, which they overlook or excuse in those of their own. Whilst "the Lord of the sabbath," who is far greater than the temple and all external institutions, authorizes those labours on his holy day, which are necessary, and conducive to the real good of ourselves or others, or subservient to piety and charity, he doubtless most strictly binds us from all secular employments of a contrary tendency. The exercise of mercy, rather than sacrifice, allows us on some occasions to omit attendance on public ordinances, and to make needful provision for our health and food: yet surely, when domestics are confined at home, and families rendered a scene of hurry and confusion, on the Lord's day, in order to furnish a feast for visitants, who can spare their time more conveniently than on other days for social indulgence, the case is very different! In censuring things of this kind, we need not fear condemning the guiltless. They, who are unable to labour for their bread, are sometimes capable of attending on God's ordinances; and in this way they may expect comfort under, or deliverance from, their calamities. But, alas! there are numbers who frequent places of worship in order to start objections, or find matter of accusation, against the servants of God: and many a good question is proposed from very base motives. We cannot, like our Lord, discern the thoughts of such objectors: yet we must go on with our duty; endeavouring, by meekness, benevolence, an irreproachable conduct, and unanswerable arguments, to obviate or silence their malicious insinuations. Men will often do more to save a trifle of their own property, than to relieve their neighbours; and some will even refuse to infringe the rest of the Lord's day by visiting the afflicted, who would not decline labour, if they were likely to lose the lives of their cattle! The Lord's day, however, is especially the time for healing the souls of men: and whilst the helpless sinner hears the voice of Christ, and endeavours to obey it, he feels, and manifests, that he hath received power to do those things, of which before he was utterly incapable; and becomes, by his holy example, a witness of the Saviour's power and love, and of the blessed effects of his Gospel.

V. 14—21.

The more good is done by the Gospel, the greater opposition will proud Pharisees and enemies excite against it: and the more clearly it is proved to be from God, the more determined will be their malice, if left to themselves; for their credit, lusts, and interests, are all at stake. We should not, however, needlessly exasperate them; but should give place, as far as it is consistent with continued endeavours to do good. Whilst we take encouragement from the condescending mildness of our gracious Lord, the chosen Servant, and well-beloved Son of the Father, in all

The parable of the hid treasure, 44; the Pearl of great price, 45, 46; the net cast into the sea, 47—50; and the house-

holder, 51, 52. Christ's countrymen are offended in him; his remark on it, and subsequent conduct, 53—58.

our weakness, and amidst our manifold corruptions and temptations, we should also pray, that his Spirit may rest upon us, and enable us to copy his example; that we may avoid all severity, ostentation, and boasting; that we may "study to be quiet, and to mind our own business;" and be gentle to those who are bruised with afflictions and temptations, or whose feeble faith and hope are like an expiring taper. Thus we should try "to strengthen the hands that hang down, and to confirm the feeble knees;" and so look to him, in behalf of ourselves and others, to bring forth judgment unto victory; expecting the time, when all the Gentiles shall trust in his name, and wait for his law.

V. 22—30.

In every way we see illustrations of the power and malice of our formidable enemies, and of the superior power and mercy of our great Deliverer. When he rescues the poor sinner from the oppression of the devil, the blind see the glory, and the dumb sing the praises, of our God: The changes effected by the power of divine grace form a continued proof, that Jesus is the Son of David and the Son of God, and that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation: this should induce all to submit to Christ; but it hath a contrary effect on numbers, who venture to ascribe the evident effects of divine power and holiness to the vilest motives, to enthusiasm, or even diabolical delusion! He, who knows men's thoughts, hath taught us how to answer such objections: for the evident tendency and effects of the Gospel are such, that if Satan could possibly patronize it, he must subvert his own kingdom. In this respect the enemies of all good might teach Christians a useful lesson; for they exhibit to them an instructive example: hateful and hating as they are, they are too subtle to divide against themselves, to subvert their own kingdom; but, whilst they agree together in malice, they tempt Christians to divide into parties, and to quarrel with each other, to the irreparable injury of the common cause! But let us observe, that there are two grand interests in the world; all that side with Christ, against the kingdom of Satan, are his friends; and when unclean spirits are cast out by the Spirit of God, in the conversion of sinners to a life of faith and obedience, the kingdom of God is come unto us. For these powerful enemies possess the sinner's heart, like strong men armed with their lusts, errors, and prejudices, and all their faculties and abilities: nor could they be expelled, did not One come upon them with superior power, who is able to bind them at his will, take away from them their usurped possessions, and employ the convert, with all his talents, in his service, and to his glory. All they, who refuse to concur, or do not rejoice, in such a revolution as this, are against Christ; and he that gathereth not with him scattereth. Alas, what pains do many take in this scattering abroad, and in ruining themselves, and others, by promoting systems of human invention in opposition to the Gospel of God our Saviour!

V. 31—37.

In various ways, men sin against the clearest evidence of truth, and even against their own consciences; till, by resisting the Holy Ghost, they provoke God to give them up to final obduracy and impenitence. Let all then be afraid of every approach to this fatal conduct: let sinners regard the voice of the Lord without delay, lest he should "swear in his wrath, that they shall never enter into his rest;" yet let no trembling penitent yield to Satan's suggestions, to suppose that the sinful words and works of the lays of his ignorance, which he now recollects with shame and contrition, or any of his sins when first brought under convictions, were of this malignant nature. All manner of sin and blasphemy shall certainly be forgiven to the true believer; and "him, that cometh to Christ, He will in no wise cast out." Indeed we might any of us have been left under condemnation, and the power of sin: but if "God hath given us repentance to the acknowledging of his truth, we are evidently escaped from this snare of the devil," and should not yield to discouraging fears. I is vain, however, for men to think that the tree is made good, when the fruit is evidently evil; or to expect good fruit from an evil tree: we should therefore daily seek to have our hearts cleansed by divine grace, and stored with the good treasure of divine truth and holy affections; that whilst numbers are corrupting, deceiving, or injuring others, with the evil things which they speak, we may be enabled continually to bring reasonable, pious, and edifying discourse, from the abundance of our hearts. We should consider this as a matter of great importance for our Judge has declared, that men shall give an account of every idle word at the last day. If there were nothing else to be then produced against us, this alone would suffice to leave us without excuse. We ought then continually to examine ourselves, and seek forgiveness for the past; and keep a constant watch over ourselves, that we may for the future habitually speak such words, and such alone, as consist with the Christian character, and as may be produced in proof of our faith and love in the day of judgment.

V. 38—50.

Men are more disposed to dictate to the Lord, and to demand those kinds and degrees of evidence, which he sees proper not to give, than to yield obedience to his call, to "repent and do works meet for repentance." The Nicaites, therefore, and many from the remote regions of the earth, who by some faint report of the Gospel have been led to inquire after Christ and his salvation, will rise up in judgment against, and condemn, unbelievers in this age and nation also. For One for more honourable and eminent in wisdom than Solomon, or all the ancient and modern sages, yea, than all prophets and apostles, is in the midst of us, making all who come to him wise unto eternal salvation, by his word, and by his Holy

A. Mark ii. 14, 15.
B. i. 29. N. 30.
C. Gen. xix. 10.
D. Luke vii. 4-8.
E. Mark iv. 1.
F. Luke v. 9.

G. 10-13. H. 25.
I. 30. N. 30. G. 30.
J. Luke ix. 38-40.
K. 2 Sam. xii. 1.
L. 7. P. N. 4.
M. Gen. xxv. 12.
N. 1-7. P. N. 4.
O. 1-7. P. N. 4.
P. 1-7. P. N. 4.
Q. 1-7. P. N. 4.
R. 1-7. P. N. 4.
S. 1-7. P. N. 4.
T. 1-7. P. N. 4.
U. 1-7. P. N. 4.
V. 1-7. P. N. 4.
W. 1-7. P. N. 4.
X. 1-7. P. N. 4.
Y. 1-7. P. N. 4.
Z. 1-7. P. N. 4.

THE same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea-side.

2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship and sat: and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, the sower went forth to sow:

4 And, when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way-side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

6 And when the sun was up, they

were scorched; and, because they had not root, they withered away:

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up and choked them:

8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold.

9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

12 And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the

viii. 26, 27. Luke vii. 13. Eph. iii. 17. Col. i. 27. ii. 12. 13. Gen. ii. 15. Jer. iv. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

Spirit. Let us then learn of him, and seek to have his kingdom set up in our hearts: then the enemy will no more be able to regain possession of us, however he may threaten or harass us. But let none rely on convictions, or external reformation: for every heart is properly the residence of unclean spirits, those excepted, which are become the temple of the Holy Spirit, by faith in Jesus Christ. These enemies will therefore watch their opportunities, when convictions and terrors are vanished, and inclinations after former indulgences revived; and, finding no effectual opposition, they will re-enter, strengthen the garrison, and render the man more entirely their slave than ever. Such persons cannot but be noticed with mingled grief and horror, by those who carefully observe the state of congregations where the Gospel is faithfully dispensed. What encouragement does our Redeemer give us to follow him wholly, to attend on his instruction, to trust in his mercy, and, by obeying him, to do the will of God our Father! Earthly relatives often fail of the duties incumbent on them: but He is such a Relation and Friend as men would have been, had sin never entered; indeed far more desirable. Whatever there is peculiar in the affection or regard of the different endeared relations of life, all centres in the love of Christ to his true disciples; yea, to the poorest, weakest, and most sinful of them! Whatever credit, comfort, or advantage could be derived from a loving brother, father, husband, or son, who was advanced to the highest state of earthly dignity and authority, this, and far more, may we confidently expect from Christ, in life, death judgment, and to eternity. Let us then cease from men, and cleave to Him: let us look upon every Christian, even in the lowest condition of life; as the brother, sister, or honoured mother, of the Lord of glory; and let us love, respect, and be kind to them, for his sake, and after his example, and count this our privilege and delight.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII. V. 1, 2. It is evident that the events recorded in the latter part of the preceding chapter took place on the same day on which our Lord spake some of

the parables contained in this: but Luke relates the concluding incident *after* the parable of the sower. When Jesus came to the sea-side, a vast number of people collected together. He went into a boat, close to the land, that he might be less incommoded, and better heard by the people. If the shore were elevated, as it probably might be, and formed a kind of semicircular bay, the people might range themselves round it, and hear with great advantage. (Gilpin.)

V. 3-8. (Marg. Ref.) (Note, Judg. ix. 8-15).—Parables are a kind of pictures of spiritual things, under the similitude of external objects; in which, when we have got the key, we perceive more of their nature by a single glance, than we could otherwise learn by laboured descriptions or multiplied distinctions. This parable of the sower seems to be a prophetic history of the effects produced by the Gospel, in all places to which it should be sent. A husbandman is represented as sowing good seed; for every man sows that kind of grain which he hopes to reap. But as he sowed,—part of the seed fell by the way-side, a road lying across the field; here the ground was trodden and the seed uncovered, and so the birds picked it up. Another part fell on ground, where a rock was covered with a very shallow soil: this being only just covered, soon sprang up, and looked very promising. But when the summer sun, in its noon-day heat, shone full on it, the soil was dried up beneath the root, and so it was scorched and withered. Another portion fell on ground that had not been cleared from thorns: this sprang up, and grew till harvest; but the thorns smothered and choked it, so that it could not ear, or yield any increase. But the rest fell into good ground, fertile and well prepared by tillage and manure, and this produced an abundant increase; some of it yielded thirty times as much as was sown, some sixty, and some even a hundred times as much. (Note, Gen. xxvi. 12.) This alone answered the sower's purpose, and recompensed his toil.

V. 9. (Note, xi. 13-15.) This was suited to call the attention of the audience to the parable; and to show them, that some peculiarly interesting instruction was intended by it.

xxxi. 29. Mark
13: 24, 28. Luke
xii. 13. xix. 14—
26. John xv. 2—
5.
xxxi. 43. fr. v.
—7. Mark xii. 4.
Luke x. 12. xii.
20. 22. xv.
25. Rev. ii. 5.
10. 15, 16.
17. Deut. xxix.
3. 4. 10. xlii. 18.
20. xlii. 18. Jer.
v. 2. Ez. xii. 4.
Mark vii. 17. 18.
John iii. 19, 20.
18. 30. 41. 2.
Cor. ii. 3, 4.
iv. 5. 10. 11. Mark
iv. 12. Luke viii. 10. John xii. 39. 10. Acts xxviii. 25—27. Rom. xi. 8—10. 2 Cor. xii. 14.

12 For ' whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, ' from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: ' because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand.

14 And in them is fulfilled ' the pro-

phesy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand: and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

15 For this people's ' heart is waxed gross, and *their* ' ears are dull of hearing, and ' their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, ' and should be converted, ' and I should heal them.

xxxi. 43. fr. v.
—7. Mark xii. 4.
Luke x. 12. xii.
20. 22. xv.
25. Rev. ii. 5.
10. 15, 16.
17. Deut. xxix.
3. 4. 10. xlii. 18.
20. xlii. 18. Jer.
v. 2. Ez. xii. 4.
Mark vii. 17. 18.
John iii. 19, 20.
18. 30. 41. 2.
Cor. ii. 3, 4.
iv. 5. 10. 11. Mark
iv. 12. Luke viii. 10. John xii. 39. 10. Acts xxviii. 25—27. Rom. xi. 8—10. 2 Cor. xii. 14.

V. 10, 11. The multitudes, who heard this parable delivered in public, did not understand it, and probably few at that time inquired further about it. But the disciples, after the audience was dismissed, came to our Lord in private, desiring to be informed why he thus taught the people, and also about the meaning of the parable. He had doubtless several reasons for adopting this method of instruction, which is peculiarly suited to assist the memory, and engage the attention; and which communicates information and conviction to the teachable, in the most simple and compendious way. ' Hereby it was visible ' who were the sons of wisdom, who had a cordial love to ' divine things, and an inflamed desire after them, and ' thought it worthy of their care and pains to search them ' out, and so were persons fitly qualified for the reception ' of Gospel-light. (Note, Prov. ii. 1—6.)—It was the ' custom of the disciples of the Jewish doctors, when they ' understood not the meaning of their parables, to go unto ' their Rabbies, to inquire the meaning of them; as did ' our Lord's disciples ask of him. And this Christ's ' hearers might have done, had they not been indisposed ' to receive the doctrine which he taught, and chosen ' rather to be held in error by the scribes and Pharisees. ' Such lessons are best remembered; for the time spent ' in unfolding them makes the idea more fixed and lasting.' (Whitby).—This happened after Christ had upbraided ' and threatened the neighbouring places, from whence ' doubtless the greatest part of the multitude came, (xi. ' 20—24:) and it is not improbable, that the Pharisees, ' who had so vilely blasphemed him this very morning, ' might with an ill purpose have gathered a company ' of their associates about Christ, to ensnare him.' (Doddridge).—The reason, however, which our Lord here assigned, is replete with instruction, warning, and encouragement. "It was given to the disciples to know "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but not to "others;" that is, not at that time, for it might afterwards be given to them also. A mystery, in the Scriptural use of the term, signifies a subject in religion of which we can know nothing, except by revelation, and nothing more than is revealed. This knowledge is received by faith only, and must be used as a principle in all our other reasonings; but itself must not be disputed, as if it were the subject of reason and argument. There are many mysteries respecting the kingdom of heaven; and it is given to Christ's true disciples to know or understand them, as far as it is needful, and to them alone. They, who in humble faith take him for their Teacher, by at-

tending to the instructions of his word, and seeking the teaching of his Spirit, attain to this knowledge; and the proud, unteachable, and unbelieving, do not; for no man can know them, except from the great Prophet of the Church. But his special choice and effectual calling made these persons his disciples, rather than others of their countrymen, and this brought them to learn of him.

V. 12. It is an invariable rule in the kingdom of Christ, "that whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and ' he shall have abundance:" that is, say many expositors, ' he who improves what he has.' Yet, if our Lord meant so, why did he not thus express himself, either here or in other places? (Marg. Ref.) There is no doubt a truth in this way of stating it; for no man improves either natural powers, or external advantages, without special grace: yet it is a truth often misunderstood and perverted. The obvious meaning is, that one of God's special gifts to his people is an earnest of others; so that he, who hath faith and grace, shall receive further communications of knowledge, wisdom, holiness, and every blessing of salvation, till he hath a vast abundance: whereas he, that hath not faith and grace, shall at last be deprived of all his other attainments and advantages, in which he trusted and gloried. The plain inferences from which are, that he who desires these blessings must seek them from Christ, or he never can have them: and he that hath received them, must bless the Lord for making him to differ, and trust Him to perfect his own good work. ' Whosoever, through my goodness and mercy, hath any measure of grace wrought in him, that man, in the effectual use of those means which I afford him, shall have yet more: but whosoever hardeneth his heart to refuse those gracious offers which are made to him, it is and shall be just with God, to take away from him those helps, and ' tenders of means and previous dispensations, which are ' made to him.' (Bp. Hall.)

V. 13. Our Lord spake in parables to the people, because they refused to improve their faculties and advantages: for they hated the truth through love of sin, and closed their eyes to the light, by proud and carnal prejudices. They saw his miracles, but could not see that he was the Messiah; and heard his doctrine, without acknowledging that it was the voice of God; and it was his sovereignty will to leave many of them to final obduracy and unbelief.

V. 14, 15. (Note, Is. vi. 9, 10. Marg. Ref.) The prophecy referred to seems to have had a peculiar respect to the times and persons here spoken of. They would

c v 3-11. xvi. 17. Luke i. 29. 30 x. 23 John xxi. 18. 2 Cor. ix 6 Eph i 17. 17.

16 But ^a blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.

17 For verily I say unto you, ^a That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

18 ¶ ^a Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

19 When any one heareth ^a the word of the kingdom, ^a and understandeth it not, then cometh ^b the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. ^c This is he which received seed by the way-side.

20. xxvi. 3. 32 Rom i 28 ii 8 2 Thes. ii 12 Heb. ii 1 John v. 20. iv. 15 Luke vii. 12. 1 John ii 13, 14 iii 12 v 18 —14

have the fullest opportunity of learning the way of salvation; yet they should not understand it, nor perceive in Jesus the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies. Because their hearts were become *gross*, or *fat*, (that is, stupid and insensible,) through pride, avarice, hypocrisy, and unbelief; so that their ears were stopped against the report of the Gospel, and they purposely closed their eyes against the light, because they hated it: and therefore God judicially left them to be blinded; so that it became impossible for them to understand, or believe, the doctrine of salvation, or to be converted, that their souls might be healed: for, had they been converted, they must have been pardoned and healed. There seems throughout to be a special reference to the malevolent Pharisees and their adherents. (Notes, xii. 22—45.) This quotation is made in the words of the Septuagint. 'That we might not suspect this grossness of heart and heaviness of ears, was the effect of nature, and not of choice, he subjoins the fault of the will, "their eyes have they closed." (Jerom.)

V. 16, 17. (Marg. Ref.) The disciples, notwithstanding remaining ignorance, mistakes, and prejudices, had already been taught of God to see and hear many things relative to his kingdom; and thus their eyes and ears were blessed by this sanctifying influence and its happy effects: they were now employed in a proper and profitable manner, and further light and instruction would continually be added to them. Their situation also was very favourable: for many prophets and righteous persons, from the beginning of the world, had desired to see the times in which they lived, and the miracles that they witnessed, and to hear the Messiah's instruction, which they daily heard; yet they were not allowed to possess the desired privilege. They looked forward to the Redeemer, who was in due time to appear, and rested their hopes on him: they had their light from this Sun, before he ascended the horizon; but they longed to see him already risen: yet this was reserved as a peculiar blessing for the apostles, whose light was proportionably more distinct and clear. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 18, 19. After this encouraging and instructive introduction, our Lord proceeded to expound the parable to his disciples. The *sower* represented him in his personal ministry, or as speaking by his apostles and faithful ministers. The *seed sown* is "the word of the kingdom," "the word of God." Not every kind of preaching is sowing this seed: if men preach mere morality, metaphysical speculations, enthusiastical delusions, human traditions, false doctrines, as the seed is congenial to the soil, an increase may be expected. But it must be of the same nature with the seed: for the good fruit of repentance,

faith, piety and holiness, can only be produced from "the word of the kingdom." This word, by those discoveries which it makes to us of God and ourselves, of sin and holiness, of Christ and eternity, is as properly a *seed*, in the heart, of all true godliness, as the grain of wheat is, in the fruitful soil, of the future crop of wheat. But as the earth must be prepared to receive the seed, by a principle of fertility and by proper culture; so the heart must be suitably disposed, or the word of God will not yield any increase. Many hearers of the Gospel are like the *way-side*: their hearts are no more suited to the holy message of God, than the high road, continually crowded and beaten by passengers, would be to receive the seed-corn. They are carnal, proud, prejudiced, and careless: they hear, but understand not, as they have no desire to understand. They come from curiosity, or custom, or worse motives, out of the midst of worldly engagements and conversation: whilst the word is sounding in their ears, they are often thinking about their previous diversions, pursuits, schemes, or topics; the persons and objects around them, or the appointments which are to succeed the tedious hour: or they come in order to object, deride, or revile; but without expectation or desire of profiting. Therefore they understand nothing of the true meaning, excellence, or importance, of what they hear: and those evil spirits, who are sure to form an attentive part of every congregation where the Gospel is truly preached, (having more employment there, and being more in danger of losing their servants, than at the places of dissipation or debauchery,) are ready immediately to catch away the word out of the mind of such hearers, by suggesting more pleasing ideas, or engaging them in vain speculations, or frivolous conversation; or by exciting their pride and passions; or to disgust them against the plain truths of God's word, or against something in the style and manner of the preacher. Thus the best sermons make no impression, and produce no effect; such hearers are neither convinced, nor informed, but remain as ignorant, infidel, careless, profligate, and ungodly, as before. 'The industry of Satan to snatch the word out of our hearts, as it discovers his enmity against the progress of the Gospel, so it doth highly commend the excellence and efficacy of it: for were it not of great importance to preserve it there, he would not be so industrious to snatch it thence; and were it not, when there, a powerful instrument to work within us that "faith which purifies the heart," why doth he do this, lest we should believe? Why is it, that men do call this quick and powerful word, this word of life, a dead letter? And when they daily by experience see, that the persuasions of themselves and others are

20 But he that ¹ received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and ¹ anon with joy receiveth it:

21 Yet hath he not ¹ root in himself, but ¹ dureth for a while: ¹ for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

22 He also that received ¹ seed among the thorns, is he that heareth the word; and ¹ the care of this world, and ¹ the deceitfulness of riches, ¹ choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

23 Another set of hearers resemble ground overrun with thorns or noxious weeds. They receive the word into a heart crowded with anxious cares, or covetous desires: they are convinced, alarmed, and quieted; they acquire knowledge, have thoughtful seasons, purpose to be Christians, consent to an orthodox creed, and make a plausible profession of religion: and perhaps they continue to the end to impose on themselves and others. But they aim to serve two masters: their great concern is about the world; they eagerly pursue riches, are solicitous to obtain a competency, to advance their families, and to make a reputable figure among their neighbours. If in lower circumstances, their chief care is about a present and future provision for themselves and their families. Or perhaps being of another turn of mind, the pleasures of the world, and the desire of pomp, luxury, or authority, predominate; while religion is only a secondary concern, to quiet conscience, to keep out the fear of hell, to keep up the hope of heaven, or to maintain the good opinion of Christians and ministers, whose approbation or tacit connivance often confirms them in this delusion. In this soil the seed seems to grow; but it is smothered by the cares of this world and the *deceitfulness* of riches: for wealth seems to promise many advantages, and men of some seriousness often pursue it, under the self-flattering idea, that they shall by means of it be enabled to do the more good; and in both respects they find in the event, that they have been deceived. The love of riches imposes on the judgment, and deludes them into multiplied methods of increasing them, some of which are fraudulent; it induces them to procrastinate their intended earnestness about religion: and allures them into endless encumbrances, infectious connexions, sinful compliances, and conformity to the world. These are the *thorns*, which grow up and choke the word; so that it becometh unfruitful, or bringeth nothing to perfection. (1 Tim. vi. 9, 10, 17, 18.) This is the most unsuspected and fatal danger in great commercial cities, and in times

often prevalent, why do they think that God's can be of no effect, without a miracle? (*Whitby*.) No man can persuade another to that which *his heart is totally set against*: and before regeneration, the heart is totally set against the Gospel. If regeneration be called a miracle in the concluding clause, our Lord's words answer the question: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." But if the learned writer meant something else than regeneration, let those who expect miracles answer him. The quotation, this excepted, which seemed to require notice, is of great importance.

V. 20, 21. Other hearers of the Gospel resemble the stony places: they are told of free salvation, of the believer's privileges, and of the felicity of heaven, and, without humiliation or change of heart, without abiding conviction of their own guilt and depravity, of the vanity of the world, their need of a Saviour, or the excellence of holiness, they hastily catch the comforts of the Gospel, take up a superficial view of religion, and become confident that all the blessings of which they hear belong to them. This delusion fills them with unsanctified joy, and excites other high and false affections; but they do not manifest godly sorrow, brokenness of heart, tenderness of conscience, or consistency of conduct. There is, however, much show of zeal and earnestness, and many pious persons think highly of them; which tends still more to enhance their joy and confidence. Thus they seem to make more progress than the humble, contrite, and conscientious Christian; and often exceed him in fluency and forwardness of speech, and in boldness for the truth, where there is no danger. Yet their hearts are proud and worldly; they therefore *endure for a while*, even so long as their profession conduces to procure them consideration and advantage. But when persecution or tribulation for the sake of the Gospel arises, it proves a scorching sun, which destroys the root of their religion, and then the blade withers. Some heavy trial must be sustained if they cleave to the Lord, or some secular advantage may be had by forsaking him; or they are proved by circumstances of peculiar temptation; and, having *no root in themselves*, not being rooted and grounded in the love of Christ, as the only and most precious Saviour of perishing sinners, they are not willing to forsake all, and bear their cross for him. Thus they are *offended*, and stumble; they find some pretence for renouncing or disguising their profession, or they turn aside to some other more loose and easy religion, according to which they can serve both God and Mammon. Many such hearers are doubtless found in our congregations, and in these easy days some of them may go on for a long time; but should persecution arise, they would drop off as the leaves from

the trees in autumn. 'He receives the word with joy, and is much affected with it, though afterwards he is offended at it: whence also it appears, that it is not enough to render us good Christians, that we at present are somewhat affected with the word, and receive it with some delight, unless it doth produce sincerity and constancy in obedience to all its precepts, even those which are most grievous to flesh and blood.' (*Whitby*).—The sowing of the seed on the stony ground, denoteth him that, at the first hearing, receives the Gospel with all greediness and joy, looking on the smoother part of it; but, for want of an *honest heart*, a good soil where it may take root, they last but a little while.' (*Hammond*.)

V. 22. Another set of hearers resemble ground overrun with thorns or noxious weeds. They receive the word into a heart crowded with anxious cares, or covetous desires: they are convinced, alarmed, and quieted; they acquire knowledge, have thoughtful seasons, purpose to be Christians, consent to an orthodox creed, and make a plausible profession of religion: and perhaps they continue to the end to impose on themselves and others. But they aim to serve two masters: their great concern is about the world; they eagerly pursue riches, are solicitous to obtain a competency, to advance their families, and to make a reputable figure among their neighbours. If in lower circumstances, their chief care is about a present and future provision for themselves and their families. Or perhaps being of another turn of mind, the pleasures of the world, and the desire of pomp, luxury, or authority, predominate; while religion is only a secondary concern, to quiet conscience, to keep out the fear of hell, to keep up the hope of heaven, or to maintain the good opinion of Christians and ministers, whose approbation or tacit connivance often confirms them in this delusion. In this soil the seed seems to grow; but it is smothered by the cares of this world and the *deceitfulness* of riches: for wealth seems to promise many advantages, and men of some seriousness often pursue it, under the self-flattering idea, that they shall by means of it be enabled to do the more good; and in both respects they find in the event, that they have been deceived. The love of riches imposes on the judgment, and deludes them into multiplied methods of increasing them, some of which are fraudulent; it induces them to procrastinate their intended earnestness about religion: and allures them into endless encumbrances, infectious connexions, sinful compliances, and conformity to the world. These are the *thorns*, which grow up and choke the word; so that it becometh unfruitful, or bringeth nothing to perfection. (1 Tim. vi. 9, 10, 17, 18.) This is the most unsuspected and fatal danger in great commercial cities, and in times

u. 8. Mark iv. 20.

Luke vii. 15.

x. Prov. i. 5, 6, 11.

xi. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

31. xxxvii. 15.

Mark x. 28.

John i. 11-13.

xvii. 47. x. 26.

xvii. 47. x. 26.

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xvii. 47. x. 26.

xvii. 47. x. 26.

xvii. 47. x. 26.

23 But he ^a that received seed into the ^x good ground, is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also ^y beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty.

24 ¶ Another parable ^a put he forth unto them, saying, ^b The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed ^c good seed in his field:

25 But while ^d men slept, his ^e enemy came and sowed ^f tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26 But ^g when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 So ^h the servants of the householder came, and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from ⁱ whence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, ^k Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30 Let ^l both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say ^m to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, ⁿ and bind them in bundles to ^o burn them: ^p but gather the wheat into my barn.

31 ¶ Another parable ^a put he forth

^h 1 Cor. iii. 5-9.
ⁱ xii. 24. 25. 26.
^j 2 Cor. x. 14.
^k 20. vi. 1.
^l Eph. iv. 11, 12.

^l Rom. xvi. 17.
^m 1 Cor. i. 11-15.
ⁿ 12. 13. 14. Gal. ii. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

^k Luke ix. 49-54.
^l 1 Cor. v. 1-7.
^m 7. 2 Cor. ii. 11. 12. 13. 14. Jude 22. 23.

^l 139. l. 12. xxi. 10-14. xxi. 6-10. 12. 32. M. l. ii. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

of outward peace and prosperity: and it is to be feared, that many are thus deceived, and lose their own souls, in attempting to gain more of this present world.

V. 23. Though so much of this precious seed seems thrown away, yet it will not all return void, or fail to prosper in that for which it is sent. Some of it falls on *good ground*, even in an *honest and good heart*, sincerely desirous of learning the truth and will of God, in order to believe and obey them. This preparation of heart is from the Lord, and the want of the honest and good heart is the only reason, why the Gospel serves to condemn numbers who hear it. When the heart is influenced by the fear of God and a desire of his favour; when it is humble and contrite: when forgiveness and grace are valued more than worldly objects; when sin is hated and dreaded, and deliverance from it earnestly desired; when a man is thus disposed to buy the truth at any price, and to become Christ's disciple at all adventures; then the ground is prepared for the good seed, and nothing can prevent its growth and increase. He whose heart is thus prepared will hear the word of God with earnest prayer to be taught by the Holy Spirit, and to be delivered from prejudice and error; he will receive it with reverence, humility, and docility; he will gradually understand more and more of its nature, excellency, authority, and tendency; he will receive it into a broken heart, by faith working by love and overcoming the world; and he will, as it were cover it over by meditation and prayer. Satan can by no means take it out of this man's heart: when it springs up, it will strike deep root, so that persecutions and afflictions, which scorch and wither the seed sown upon the rock, will serve to ripen this for the harvest: the cares, interests, and pleasures of the world will be subordinated and moderated, with reference to the welfare of the soul; and when they seem ready to injure the believer, or to mar his fruitfulness, he will bestow pains to root them up, as thorns and weeds, lest they should deprive him of his expected increase. Thus the seed will produce a plenteous crop, and he, in whose heart it grows, will "bring forth *fruit with patience*," and perseverance in well-doing

even to the end. All who thus receive the good seed will manifest their holiness of heart by holy actions; their piety, justice, truth, goodness, mercy, temperance, and meekness, will glorify God, adorn the Gospel, and do substantial benefit to mankind. They will not all be alike fruitful; but all will yield a rich increase of those fruits of the Spirit, which are the effects and evidence of true faith and repentance. These alone are valued by the Sower of the seed and the Giver of the increase. In all congregations, where the true word of God hath been preached hitherto, there have been these four sorts of hearers: and no others are conceivable. So that we may consider the parable as a remarkable prophecy, the accomplishment of which continually proves the truth of the sacred Scripture.

V. 24-30. The kingdom of heaven, or the Gospel-dispensation, resembled a man that sowed good seed in his field. But whilst his servants, who were set to watch the field, were asleep, an enemy came privily, sowed seed of another nature, and then went away. When, however, the seed was grown, it was plain that there were tares among the wheat. It is not certainly known what is meant by the word rendered *tares*; but it is evident, that the pulse called by this name was not intended: otherwise the tares might early and certainly have been known, and eradicated without danger; and if permitted to grow till harvest, they would have been too valuable to be burnt. Some useless noxious weed must therefore be signified, that could not so easily be distinguished from the blade of the wheat. When, however, the servants expressed their concern and surprise, that the crop should thus be marred, they were told that "an enemy had done this." Nor would their Lord permit them to pull them up, lest, through error or inadvertency, they should root up the wheat also. Though injurious to the crop, it was best that both should grow together till the harvest; and then he would give previous orders to the reapers, to separate the tares, and bind them in bundles for fuel, as well as to take care of the wheat. (Notes, 36-43.)

ev. 21. Prov. 11.
2-5 xvi. 16.
xvii. 10. xviii. 1.
John. 35. Rom.
xv. 4 I Cor. 15.
9. 10. Col. iii. 3
iii. 3, 4, 16.

44 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is
like unto treasure hid in a field; the which
when a man hath found he hideth, and

for joy thereof, goeth and selleth all
that he hath, and buyeth that field.

45 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven

Mat. x. 34. xi. 24-26. — c. Prov. xxiii. 23. Is. lv. 1. Rev. iii. 15.

Mat. 21. 27. 29.
Luke. xiv. 30.
xviii. 23. 24. 28.
6-8 Acts ii. 44
7. 17. 32-35
Paul. iii. 7-9

V. 36—43. After our Lord had spoken the preceding parables, he dismissed the multitude and retired into a house; where his disciples applied to him to explain the parable of the tares, as that seems most of all to have perplexed them: and he answered, that “the Son of man,” the Messiah, was the Sower of the good seed; that is, personally, and by his ministers: and this implied, that he is the Lord and Proprietor of the field. This represented the world, throughout which the word of God was to be preached under the Gospel. The good seed, (or those converts produced from it,) are the *children of the kingdom*, true believers, the loyal subjects of Christ, and heirs of heaven: but the produce of the bad seed are the children of the wicked one, heretics, hypocrites, antichristians, antinomians, and enthusiasts of every description. As the parable of the sower represents what is wrong in the visible church, (even where the true Gospel is faithfully preached,) through the subtlety of Satan and the depravity of the human heart: so, that of the tares represents the fatal effects of false teachers and doctrine, drawing men off from the truth, or prejudicing them against it. These false and disgraceful characters are the genuine produce of false doctrine and distorted views of Christianity, which “Satan, transformed into an angel of light,” by his ministers of various descriptions, propagates in the world; even as true believers are the produce of the real Gospel attended by the influence of the Holy Spirit. The devil, the enemy of Christ and of men, sows this seed by his servants, in order to deceive souls and disgrace the Gospel: he does it *by night*, and *privily*; he is most successful when least suspected, and when ministers and Christians are most unwatchful. The produce of this corrupt seed is not immediately discovered, but gradually detected. And though gross transgressors, and such as openly oppose the fundamentals of the Gospel, ought to be separated from the society of the faithful, yet many of the children of the kingdom are so defective, and many of the children of the wicked one so plausible, that an exact discrimination cannot be made by human discernment; and by attempting too much, true believers may be rejected, stumbled, or discouraged: much less must separation by persecution be attempted, by which far more of the wheat hath been eradicated than of the tares, ever since the officious servants, contrary to their Master’s express command, have employed that unhallowed mean. In general, they must be let alone till the harvest. This will be at the end of the world: for though death will separate them as to their souls, yet the grand and public separation will be at the day of judgment. Then the holy angels will be employed as the reapers in this harvest, by the Son of man, the incarnate Saviour and Judge, whose creatures, worshippers, and servants, they are. These will gather together all the wicked in the world; and especially all heretical and hypocritical professors of the Gospel, who have caused scandals and wrought iniquity, from every part of the Church, in order to their destruction; even as the tares are bound up in bundles to be burned: and they shall

be cast into hell, as into a furnace of fire, where will be doleful lamentations and gnashing of teeth in rage and despair. When the tempters and the tempted, the deceivers and the deceived, and those that have associated together, and encouraged each other in delusion and iniquity, shall be consigned to the same punishment, and with desperate enmity shall charge their destruction upon each other; then these tares will, as it were, “be bound in bundles to be burned.” But at that time the righteous, the children of the kingdom, will shine forth in the image of Christ, with the lustre of the unclouded noon-day sun, in the kingdom of their Father; being made unspeakably glorious, excellent, wise, and happy. These are truths universally interesting, and infinitely important: and every man in the world is concerned to attend to them, as he values the salvation of his soul.

V. 44. The nature of the kingdom of heaven, as it is set up in the world and in the heart, and as it is counteracted by human depravity and by false doctrine, had been shown: and here its *privileges and blessings*, and the way in which we obtain admission into it, are illustrated. In this view, the kingdom of heaven is like an immense treasure, concealed in a field. Many walk over this field, without knowing that it contains such a treasure: but when a man hath found it, he conceals his discovery, in order that no one may prevent his intended acquisition; and, with great joy at the prospect of speedily being enriched, he goes and sells all his property, that he may purchase the field and every thing contained in it. This represents the invaluable blessings of the Gospel, which suffice to render us rich and happy to all eternity; these are contained in the sacred Scriptures; yet multitudes have access to them, without being aware of the unsearchable riches they contain. But when a man is brought to a proper sense of his character, state, and wants, and becomes in earnest about eternal life, he begins to search the word of God with greater diligence and care; and thus discovering the treasure, he resolves, at any rate, to obtain it. His joy at this discovery is moderated by fear of coming short, and he uses every precaution against it. He renounces all hopes, claims, pursuits, interests, or pleasures, that are incompatible with salvation. Nothing indeed can be given as the *price* of this salvation, yet much must be given up for the sake of it. This is implied by *purchasing* the field. The person who is thus decided, does not conclude that salvation belongs to him, because he has heard and assented to the Gospel. He rejoices, that he has found such a treasure, even before he can call it his own; but he knows that he must go to the price of the whole religion of the Scriptures, and receive Christ in all respects, if he would be saved and enriched by him. Thus he enters the kingdom, and obtains possession of its privileges; and when he has purchased the field, and begins to examine the treasure, he finds it like a mine of gold, which is more and more rich, the longer and the deeper it is wrought. (Marg. Ref.)

xxv 26 xxvi 5.
 xxvii 13-16
 xxviii 10, 11, 12-16
 xxix 20
 x 20
 1. 7. xxix 13
 6. 7. Ec ii 2-
 12 xii 8 13
 1. 12. xxix 13
 Cor. iii. 21-23
 Eph. iii. 8. Col.
 3. 3. 1 John v.
 13, 12 Rev. xxi.
 21.

Mark x. 28-31
 Luke xviii 27-
 28 Acts xx. 24.
 Gal vi 13.
 h. iv. 19 Mark 1.
 12 Luke v. 10
 20-26 xxvii 9.
 10. xxv. 1-4.
 Luke xiv. 21-
 23 John x. 2.
 6 Acts v. 1-10.
 viii 16-22. xx.
 30 1 Cor. v. 1-6
 1-12 xi 19.
 2 Cor. xi. 13-15.
 26 xii 20, 21.
 Gal iii 4 2 Tim
 iii 2-5 iv 1-4.
 Tit. i. 9-11-2
 Pet. ii. 1-3 13
 2-12 1 John ii. 16, 19. iv. 1-6. Jude 4, 5. Rev. iii. 1, 15-17. x 30, 40-43 iii. 12
 159. xxiv 31. m xxii 12-14. xxv. 3-12 19-30. 2 Thes. i. 7-10. Rev. xx. 12-15

xxv 26 xxvi 5.
 xxvii 13-16
 xxviii 10, 11, 12-16
 xxix 20
 x 20
 1. 7. xxix 13
 6. 7. Ec ii 2-
 12 xii 8 13
 1. 12. xxix 13
 Cor. iii. 21-23
 Eph. iii. 8. Col.
 3. 3. 1 John v.
 13, 12 Rev. xxi.
 21.

Mark x. 28-31
 Luke xviii 27-
 28 Acts xx. 24.
 Gal vi 13.
 h. iv. 19 Mark 1.
 12 Luke v. 10
 20-26 xxvii 9.
 10. xxv. 1-4.
 Luke xiv. 21-
 23 John x. 2.
 6 Acts v. 1-10.
 viii 16-22. xx.
 30 1 Cor. v. 1-6
 1-12 xi 19.
 2 Cor. xi. 13-15.
 26 xii 20, 21.
 Gal iii 4 2 Tim
 iii 2-5 iv 1-4.
 Tit. i. 9-11-2
 Pet. ii. 1-3 13
 2-12 1 John ii. 16, 19. iv. 1-6. Jude 4, 5. Rev. iii. 1, 15-17. x 30, 40-43 iii. 12
 159. xxiv 31. m xxii 12-14. xxv. 3-12 19-30. 2 Thes. i. 7-10. Rev. xx. 12-15

V. 45, 46. This parable is nearly of the same import as the preceding: if there be any difference, the former represents all spiritual blessings, as they are communicated to us through the Scriptures; this latter, as they are laid up in Christ, to whom the Scriptures direct us for them. Every man is a merchant seeking goodly pearls: all men seek happiness, and each deems his favourite object a precious jewel. But when the convinced sinner discovers the glory and preciousness of Christ, as the all gracious Saviour of the lost, he sees Him to be "the Pearl of great price," and all things else comparatively worthless. Whatever it may cost him, he is determined to purchase this invaluable Pearl, which will surely enrich the possessor to all eternity; and if he obtains not this prize, he sees that eternal misery is his portion. He "therefore counts all things but loss and dung that he may win Christ;" and being determined rather to part with riches, reputation, liberty, or even life, than deny the Saviour, and giving up all other pleas and hopes, but those that arise from his person, undertaking, sufferings, and mediation, he obtains admission into the kingdom, and to the participation of all its blessings. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 47-50. This parable seems to comprise the meaning both of that of the sower, and that of the tares, under an allusion to those things, about which several of the apostles had been most conversant. The means used for replenishing the Messiah's kingdom would resemble the casting of a large net into the sea, which, being filled and drawn to shore, would be found to contain valuable fishes, and such as were worthless; either of a bad sort, or out of season, or dead, and putrid. These the fishermen would at last separate, gathering the good into their vessels, and throwing the bad away. Thus multitudes profess Christianity, and worship in the visible Church, as long as they live; but at the last the angels of Christ executing his decisions, as Judge of the world, shall make an exact discrimination between the good and the bad; gathering true believers into heaven, and casting worthless professors of the Gospel, as well as other wicked men, into the place of final punishment.

of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

51 ¶ Jesus saith unto them, ° Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every ° scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, ° which bringeth forth out of his treasure ° things new and old.

53 ¶ And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, ° he departed thence.

54 And ° when he was come into his own country, ° he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that ° they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this

xxiv 50, 51.
 Luke xiv 27,
 28. Rev. xiv 10,
 11. xvi 10, 11.
 O. ii. 13. xiv 17.
 xvi 11. xxiv 15.
 Mark iv 34. vii.
 18. xii 17, 18.
 Luke ix. 44. 45.
 Acts viii 30, 31
 1 John v. 20.
 P. xxiii. 34. Ezra
 vii. 6. 10. 21.
 Luke xl. 49. 2
 Cor. iii. 1-6.
 Col. i. 7. 1 Tim.
 6. 15, 16. 2
 Tim. iii 16, 17.
 Tit. i. 9. ii. 6, 7.
 q. xii. 5. Prov. x.
 20, 21. xi 30 xvi
 20-22. xxi 17.
 18. Fe. xii. 17.
 11. 2 Cor. iv. 5-
 7. 10. Eph. iii.
 16. 5 Col. iii. 16.
 R. xii. vii 13.
 John xiii 24. i.
 1. 12. 13. 35.
 1. 12. Mark vi.
 1, 2. Luke i. 16
 0. 10. John i. 1.
 u. p. xxi 22 xii.
 9, 10. Acts xiii.
 46. xxviii. 17.
 16. Acts i. 12.

xxiv 50, 51.
 Luke xiv 27,
 28. Rev. xiv 10,
 11. xvi 10, 11.
 O. ii. 13. xiv 17.
 xvi 11. xxiv 15.
 Mark iv 34. vii.
 18. xii 17, 18.
 Luke ix. 44. 45.
 Acts viii 30, 31
 1 John v. 20.
 P. xxiii. 34. Ezra
 vii. 6. 10. 21.
 Luke xl. 49. 2
 Cor. iii. 1-6.
 Col. i. 7. 1 Tim.
 6. 15, 16. 2
 Tim. iii 16, 17.
 Tit. i. 9. ii. 6, 7.
 q. xii. 5. Prov. x.
 20, 21. xi 30 xvi
 20-22. xxi 17.
 18. Fe. xii. 17.
 11. 2 Cor. iv. 5-
 7. 10. Eph. iii.
 16. 5 Col. iii. 16.
 R. xii. vii 13.
 John xiii 24. i.
 1. 12. 13. 35.
 1. 12. Mark vi.
 1, 2. Luke i. 16
 0. 10. John i. 1.
 u. p. xxi 22 xii.
 9, 10. Acts xiii.
 46. xxviii. 17.
 16. Acts i. 12.

-20- -x John vi 15 16. Acts i. 12.

V. 51, 52. Our Lord seems to have spoken these latter parables to his disciples apart from the multitude; and he demanded of them, whether they understood the things intended by them? To which they answered, (perhaps too confidently,) that they did: yet it is probable that they had a general apprehension of his meaning, as there was no immediate reference to his sufferings and death; for it is evident that they were far more prejudiced in respect of his priestly office, than about any other subject. He therefore concluded the whole with another parable, immediately relating to their office in the Church. The scribes were the teachers of the Jews at that time; and the apostles and other ministers were to be the teachers under the Christian dispensation. Every one of them therefore ought to be a scribe, well instructed in all things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven. This he represented to them under the similitude of a householder, who has a large family to provide for: such an one will take care to have a stock of provisions in hand for their supply, to which he will be adding continually those things which he judges to be needful, or useful. Thus the people would depend on the apostles, as stewards of the mysteries of God, who were appointed to dispense to them the provision for their souls. They should, therefore, carefully treasure up in their memory and heart all that they had learned, and add to their fund of knowledge continually, deriving fresh instruction from all they heard, saw, or experienced. Then they would be able to bring forth old truth, with new observations, illustrations, and exhortations; and to lead the people forward in knowledge, as they made progress themselves. Some reference may also be had to the old and new dispensations. "They ought to be diligent, who have not only to be wise for themselves, but to dispense the wisdom of God to others." (*Beza.*)

V. 53. (*Mark iv. 35.*) St. Mark expressly fixes our Lord's crossing the sea of Tiberias, to go over to the Gadarenes, to the evening of the day on which he spake the parable of the sower; so that, on finishing his parables, he sailed thither, and left the people to reflect on them.

man this wisdom, and these mighty works?

55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?

57 And they were offended in him.

But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

58 And he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

Rom. xi. 20. He! iii. 12-19. iv. 6-11.

V. 54-58. On another occasion Jesus went to Nazareth, (called his own country,) and there he taught in the synagogue; thus giving the inhabitants another opportunity of hearing his doctrine, and seeking the benefit of those miracles, of which they must have heard many surprising accounts. (Notes, Luke iv. 16-32.) Indeed, the authority and wisdom with which he spake astonished his former neighbours, and led them to inquire, where he had obtained this wisdom and miraculous power? But as they were acquainted, as they supposed, with his low parentage, education, and manner of life, and knew that he had neither been brought up under the scribes, nor authorized by the chief priests, they perversely objected those things to him, which indeed were the most evident proofs that he was sent by God. Probably they did not know, that he was born at Bethlehem, and of the family of David. By comparing several passages in the Gospels, (Marg. Ref.) it appears that Mary, the wife of Cleophas, was the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus; and that James and Joses were her sons. According to the common way of speaking, being such near relations, they are called brethren, especially as they seem to have lived much together; and it is probable, that the others here mentioned were either the children of Cleophas and Mary, or some other standing in the same near relation to our Lord. But some think, that they were Joseph's children by a former wife. They were, however, well known at Nazareth, as persons in a low and poor condition, who were nearly related to Jesus; and this proved an occasion of falling, to the proud and prejudiced inhabitants. On this occasion our Lord observed, that a prophet was not without honour, except in his own country, and among his own relations; they, who had most known and conversed with the man, were least disposed to respect the prophet. He is thought to take too much upon him, in authoritatively addressing their consciences; they are displeased with his pretensions; and the credit that he acquired, and various circumstances of no importance, respecting his former occupations and appearance, recur to their memory, and prejudice them against all he says. The unbelief of the Nazarenes, however, precluded them from sharing the benefit of our Lord's power and grace: few came to him for healing, and he deemed it not consistent with his wisdom and dignity to obtrude his miracles and presence upon them; so he retired, and left them to their prejudices; and, as far as we can find, he went among them no more. (Note, Mark vi. 1-6.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-17.

Our divine Teacher orders every thing in that manner,

which best tends to the edification of the humble, teachable, and attentive disciple; but at the same time he leaves occasions of falling in the way of the careless, the captious, the self-sufficient, and presumptuous.—We have not only his word to instruct us, but, when we meet with difficulties, we are allowed, and required, to call on him in private, for the teaching of his Holy Spirit: and to those, who thus wait on him, “it is given to know the “mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,” which are concealed from all others under an impenetrable veil. We should therefore fear above all things an unteachable disposition, the result of ignorance, folly, pride, and the carnal mind. To persons of this temper, the things of the Spirit of God appear foolishness; and by deriding, reviling, and opposing them, they provoke the Lord to leave them under the power of strong delusions, to their final perdition. Such men may have excellent abilities, and profound erudition, and many valuable advantages; but not having humble faith and love, all else will soon be taken from them, or turn to their unspeakable detriment. But the meaneast and most illiterate believer is happy; his senses and faculties are blessed, they are employed to good purpose, and are instruments of righteousness unto God. Under the Christian dispensation, we all enjoy that blessed light, and hear that joyful sound, which prophets and righteous men of old desired to see and hear, and were not able; and if we have grace to make a proper use of our advantages, more knowledge and wisdom will be given us, and we shall have abundance. But do any desire these blessings, who cannot ascertain that they have received them? Let them wait on the Lord for his teaching, and apply to the Scriptures and to prayer: let them not close their own eyes and ears, and then God will not close them: and let them remember that God's purposes and promises are perfectly consistent, and that “every one that asketh “receiveth.” As for those, who harden themselves against the truth, they can have no reason to complain, if God leave them to their perverse choice, till they be so blinded that, they can neither see, hear, be converted, nor healed.

V. 18-23.

The good seed of divine truth should be sown in every part of the field all over the world, though it can only bear fruit upon the good ground. But let all, who presume to preach, be careful to sow the “word of the “kingdom,” and to keep this good seed free from every intermixture: let them sow it liberally, and “be instant “in season and out of season,” “whether men will hear, “or forbear.” For these things they are accountable; but not for success, except as they prevent it by their own misconduct; nor should they be surprised or discouraged,

CHAP. XIV.

Herod supposes Jesus to be John Baptist risen from the dead, 1, 2. John's imprisonment and death, through the resentment of Herod, Herodias, and her daughter, 3—12. Jesus departs to a desert place, and miraculously feeds the multitudes, 13—21. He retires to a mountain to pray, having sent the disci-

ples away to the ship, 22—25. He comes to them walking on the sea, 26, 27. Peter obtains leave to come on the water, begins to sink, and is preserved and rebuked, 28—31. Jesus enters the ship, the storm ceases, and the disciples worship him as the Son of God, 32, 33. Landing at Caesarea Philippi, he heals all the sick who touch the hem of his garment, 34—36.

if many hear in vain or to bad purpose: for this was the case, when our Lord himself condescended to preach the Gospel. We should, however, especially look to ourselves, that we may ascertain what sort of hearers we are. We ought to beg of God to prepare our hearts as good ground; to teach us the value of his word; to deliver our minds from pride and prejudice; to preserve us from wandering thoughts and vain imaginations; and to impress us with a serious and earnest desire to learn of him all those things which pertain to salvation. For want of thus giving earnest heed, many hearers of the pure Gospel "receive the seed by the way-side;" thus Satan immediately catches it out of their hearts, and no good effect can follow. Though this may not be altogether the case with us, yet we should be humbled by the recollection that it too often is so. It is the great object of our enemy to deprive us of the blessing, totally or in part: and our's ought to be to disappoint him. Having therefore gone to hear the word with a mind prepared by recollection and devotion; and having attended on it with serious and humble reverence; we should seek to preserve it in our hearts, by retirement, meditation, prayer, or pious conversation. But there are more plausible paths to ruin, than those of the careless, the infidel, or the profligate: numbers of those, who are greatly affected, and who are led to make a high profession, with much confidence, joy, and violent zeal, are found by the event to have no root in themselves: for without deep humiliation, reverential fear of God, and a solemn sense of eternal things, the evil of sin, and the lost estate of our souls, all high affections resemble the joy of a madman, who deems all the magnificent edifices which he sees to be his own. Nothing can so grow in an unhumiliated heart, as to stand the noon-day sun of tribulation and persecution, in all their varied forms: many, when thus tried, go out from among God's people, because not of them: whilst some upright Christians are ready to stumble at the truths of God, because such men seem to be exceptions to them. But if this superficial religion will not stand these trials, how will it endure in the day of judgment? Let us, however, beware of the *thorns*, as well as of the *rock*: many a man has a name to live, whom God sees to be dead in sin: many deep convictions and serious purposes are choked by the love of the world, and the things that are in the world; (1 John ii. 15—17:) thus no fruit is brought to perfection. Such professed Christians often draw their hope of heaven from the Gospel; but their present comfort is derived from the world. The kingdom of God and its righteousness are placed *last*; and the getting,

keeping, and spending of deceitful riches, or anxiety about secular affairs, cheats them of their time, and at last of their souls; for unless the Gospel reader our souls fruitful, it will never bring us to glory. Let us then continually watch and pray against these fatal delusions, and keep at a distance from every degree of this pernicious attachment to worldly objects. Let us be instant in prayer for that honest and good heart, which is the only soil in which the good seed will spring up, and grow, and ripen, with a rich increase. This is the grand distinction betwixt the Christian and all other men: and the preachers of the Gospel do as much towards ensuring success to their labours, when employed in earnest prayer to the Lord thus to prepare the people's hearts for the seed, as when faithfully dispensing the word of life; and in this part of the work, all that love the souls of men may afford them effectual assistance. Nor let it be forgotten, that there are different degrees of fruitfulness among true Christians, to which their own present comfort, or future glory, will be proportioned: we should therefore "abide in Christ, that we may bring forth much fruit," "even an hundred fold," that God may be glorified, and that all may know whose disciples we are.

V. 24—30—36—43.

Besides the dangers to which men are exposed, through the deceitfulness of their own hearts and the subtlety of Satan, even where the good seed is sown, there is also another set of dangers, from the bad seed which the enemy is continually endeavouring to sow in the same field. Though the servants be watchful, this enemy will find time to work: but his chief advantage arises from their drowsiness and unsuspecting inattention. No wonder then that so many spring up in the visible Church, whose pernicious heresies, unchristian spirit, or immoral conduct, prove them to be the children of the wicked one. The enemies of the Gospel indeed charge all their pernicious sentiments and enormous crimes on the truth itself; and this answers Satan's end, for many are thus prejudiced, and perish. But the servants know that they spring from seed of another kind; and often wonder as well as grieve, to find tares where wheat was sown. This brings them to complain to, and consult their Lord; and he shows them that "an enemy hath done this." It is indeed our duty to counteract, by all proper means, the effects of these fatal delusions: yet we may be too officious in attempting to make a complete separation. This exceeds our ability; and if we attempt it, we shall be in danger of rooting up

^a Mark vi. 11-16.

^b vii. 19. Luke ix.

^c 7-9. xiii. 31.

^d 32. xxi. 8-12.

^e 15. Acts. ii. 27.

^f Luke iii. 1.

^g xii. 11. xvi. 14.

AT that time ^a Herod the ^b tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, ^c 2 And said unto his servants, ^d This is

John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works ^e do ^f shew forth themselves in him. ^g ^{* Or, are wrought by him.}

the wheat along with the tares. Thus the devil hath often succeeded in bringing in furious controversies and accursed persecutions, under pretence of opposing and eradicating heresies, to the unspeakable detriment and reproach of the Christian Church. Indeed both must, in general, be left to grow together unto the harvest; and perfect purity must not be expected till we come to heaven. At length, however, an awful separation will be made; and then the angels of our glorious Judge will gather out of his kingdom all that offend and work iniquity, and cast them into a furnace of fire, where shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. What a dreadful event will this be to the hypocrite and the deceiver, who will perish miserably, with all those who have been stumbled, prejudiced, deceived, and hardened by them! But what a blessed event will this be for the true believer, who will then shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of his father! May we be found of that happy number, and may increasing numbers consider these things for their good!

V. 31--35--45--50.

As eternal life is set before us in the Scripture, like a treasure hid in a field, may we diligently search that sacred book, that we may become acquainted with its invaluable contents: and let us be very circumspect, that we be not deprived, or come short of, the felicity to which it directs us. And as all the salvation of God is laid up in Christ, our great Prophet, Priest, and King; let us determine, by the grace of God, to part with all that we have, that we may be made possessors of this inestimable treasure. What worthless pebbles are all worldly things, compared with this pearl of great price! Why then should we hesitate to give up all for him? He, who is thus disposed, will never come short of him, though he may often fear that he shall; but he that prefers any thing to Christ, will not obtain his unsearchable riches, though he may often be confident that he shall. Many of this kind are enclosed in the Gospel-net; and the fishers of men will find themselves mistaken in them, when the grand discrimination shall be made: yet let them go on patiently with their work, for their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. From small beginnings we may hope that a large increase will arise, perhaps after our decease: the grain of mustard-seed, which we have sown and deemed to be lost, may at length spring up and become a tree: the leaven, that seemed buried in the hearts of the hearers, may be gradually diffusing its influence, till the whole lump be leavened; and thus many may hereafter appear to be cast into the very mould, and transformed into the very temper, of the Gospel, of whom perhaps we have now little hopes.

V. 46--53.

We should often suppose, that our Teacher inquires of us whether we have understood all these things? And we

should endeavour to be able, on good grounds, to answer him, "Yea, Lord." If we would be scribes well instructed unto the kingdom of God, we must be always learners. Our place is at Christ's feet; we must daily learn the old lessons over again, and new lessons also; and we must seek to have an increasing fund of knowledge and wisdom, the result of study, experience, and observation, that we may render old subjects attractive and interesting by new elucidations and applications.

Let none wonder if faithful and able ministers are regarded with contempt and enmity, even where they labour most to do good, or where they might be supposed to possess the greatest influence. Men are seldom disposed to be taught by their neighbours or relations, or by their equals or inferiors. Even the wisdom, power, holiness, and beneficence of Christ, did not preserve him from the most illiberal prejudices and contempt, in his own city and among his own relations. It is a general case, that the truths spoken are disregarded, in proportion as the speaker is known; even where there is no reason for it in his character and conduct: for the carnal heart is glad of any pretence for rejecting the spiritual word of God. Thus, whilst the servant of the Lord loses his labour, and is treated with contempt, men lose the benefit of the Gospel, yea, lose their own souls; and the power and grace of the Saviour are of no avail to them, because of their unbelief.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV. V. 1. 2. (*Marg. Ref.*) John was not cast into prison till some considerable time after Christ had entered on his public ministry. (*John iii. 22-26. iv. 1-3.*) It is supposed, that John lay above a year in prison; and some time must have passed after his death, before Herod could conclude that he was risen again, to perform the miracles of which he heard. We may therefore suppose that more years had elapsed after Christ's baptism, than harmonizers in general can make out. Herod is called the *Tetrarch*, and afterwards the *king*. (9.) He was the son of Herod the great, whose dominions were divided into four parts among his sons after his decease; and the word *Tetrarch* signifies the ruler of the fourth part: Judea, one fourth in this division, soon fell under the rule of the Roman governor, and other alterations shortly took place. Herod, however, who was surnamed Antipas, was allowed to hold his tetrarchy, in which he was as much a king as his father had been, only his dominions were smaller. Some think that he was a Sadducee, because what is called the leaven of the Sadducees is elsewhere called the leaven of Herod: (xvi. 6. *Mark viii. 15.*) It is most wonderful, that Herod and his courtiers should not have known of our Lord's preaching and miracles at an earlier period; especially as he spent most of his time in Galilee. Some think that Herod had been absent at Rome during the former part of our Lord's ministry; but if this were so, his nobles and counsellors had not all been absent likewise. Others think that he, at this time, attended to the report,

3 xxvii. 34-61.
Acts vii. 2.

12 And his disciples came, and ^{*} took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

3 y 1, 2 x 23, xii. 15.
Mark vi. 30.
—33. Luke ix.
16. John vi. 1, 2.

13 ¶ When ^r Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart; and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

a ix 36. xv. 32.
Mark vi. 34, viii. 1.
—ix. 32.
Luke vii. 13.
xix. 41. John xi.
33-35. Heb. ii.
17. iv. 15 y 2.
a Mark vi. 35-36.
Luke ix. 12.

14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, ^z and was moved with compassion towards them, and he healed their sick.

b xv. 23. Mark
viii. 3.

15 And when it was evening, ^a his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; ^b send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.

this occasion, yet, pleading his oath and his regard for his guests, he commanded his immediate execution. Herod's oath was rash and profane in the extreme; and when it was found to involve such consequences, it became absolutely unlawful to observe it: he ought to have repented of his impiety, and with abhorrence to have rejected Salome's application. Nor was it very honourable to his guests, to suppose that they would be offended, if he refused to murder this holy man, through a rash engagement at a banquet in their presence. Had Salome demanded the execution of some esteemed chieftain among them, who had displeased Herodias, they would doubtless have arisen to oppose the demand: but probably John was obnoxious to many of them, as well as to Herodias. Accordingly he was suddenly and speedily dismissed to his eternal rest; and his head, reeking in its blood, was brought as a strange present to Salome, and by her given to her mother, who is reported to have treated it with indignant barbarity. This horrid spectacle could gratify the malevolence even of a female! and it was customary for the heads of criminals to be thus brought to those who condemned them, in order to certify that they were really put to death. Thus, by a mysterious providence, this most eminent man of God was cut off, in the prime of life and fitness for usefulness, to gratify the malice of an incestuous adulteress, to recompense the vain exhibition of a giddy young female, by the orders of a rash, perhaps intoxicated, prince, and to humour the companions of his revels! But they could not long enjoy this impious and cruel triumph. It is recorded that Salome had her head cut off by the ice, through its breaking as she passed over it. But, however that was, Herod was shortly after engaged in a disastrous war on account of Herodias; he was at length expelled his territories, and they both died in exile in a distant land.

V. 12. When John's disciples heard of his death, they came, and were allowed to take his body; and, having honourably buried it, they went to inform Jesus of what had taken place, and probably many of them became his followers.

V. 13, 14. This seems to refer, not to our Lord's Vol. IV.—No. 25.

16 But Jesus said unto them, ' They need not depart; give ^z them to eat.

17 And they say unto him, ' We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

18 He said, Bring them hither to me.

19 And ^c he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and two fishes, and, looking up to heaven, ^e he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

20 And they did all eat, and ^b were filled; ^d and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

21 And they that had eaten were ^k about five thousand men, besides women and children.

1 Kings xvii. 12-16. 2 Kings iv. 43, 44. Prov. xiii. 25. Ez. ix. 14-16. Lev. i. 6. Luke 9. 53. ix. 17. John vi. 7. 11. —1 xv. 37, 38. xvi. 8-10. Mark vi. 42-44. viii. 3. 9. 10-21. John vi. 12-14. —k John vi. 10. Acts iv. 4. 24. 2 Cor. ix. 8-11. Phil. iv. 13.

hearing of John's death, but to Herod's supposition, that he was John Baptist arisen from the dead; being a continuation of the subject from the second verse. About the same time the apostles returned to him, (*Marg. Ref.*) and Jesus, to avoid observation, as well as to give them some relaxation, departed in a boat into an unfrequented place, on the shore of the sea of Tiberias: but the people, hearing which way he bent his course, followed him by land, to a great distance from their cities and villages. And when he saw them, he did not object to the intrusion, but compassionately healed all the sick persons that they had been able to bring along with them; as well as taught them many things.

V. 15-21. This miracle is recorded by all the evangelists, without any material variation. (*Marg. Ref.*) When Christ had taught the multitudes till the day began to decline, some of the apostles stated, that, as the time was past, it would be proper to dismiss the people, that they might reach the neighbouring villages before night, and thus procure lodging and victuals. But Jesus answered, that they need not depart; for the disciples ought to give them food. On examination, they found that no more than five loaves, (barley-loaves,) and two fishes, could be procured for the whole company. But Jesus ordered this small provision to be brought; and having, with up-lifted eyes, returned thanks, and prayed for a blessing on it, (which we may suppose to have been his constant custom,) (*Marg. Ref.*) he began to break and distribute the bread and the fishes to the disciples, that they might dispense it to the multitude; and it is probable that the portion given to each continued to increase, by his creating power, as they dispensed it, till the whole multitude was sufficed! He then ordered them to gather together the fragments, that nothing might be lost; when they found they had twelve baskets full left, which seems to have been far more than they had at first: and on these broken pieces of barley-bread and dried fish, we may suppose that Christ and his disciples made afterwards many a contented and thankful meal. As the men were placed on the grass, by hundreds and by fifties, or a hundred in rank and fifty in

1 Mark vi. 45.

22 ¶ And straightway ¹ Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

m xxi 36. xv. 39. m

23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, ^h he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, ^o he was there alone.

n vi 6. xxi. 36

Mark vi. 46

Luko vi. 12

Acta vi. 4

o Johani. 15-17

24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, ^p tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

p viii 24. Is. lii.

11 Mark vi. 48

Johani vi. 18

q xxiv. 43. Luke

xii. 38

r Job. ix. 8 Ps

xxiii. 3. 4. civ.

3. Mark vi. 48

John vi. 19

Rev. x. 2. 5. 6.

a 1 Sam xxviii

12-14. Job iv

14-16. Dan x.

6-12 Mark vi.

49. 50. Luke i.

11, 12 xxiv 5

Acta xii. 15

Rev. i. 17.

25 And in ^q the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went unto them, ^r walking on the sea.

26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, ^s they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

27 But straightway Jesus spake unto

them, saying, 'Be of good cheer: ^t it is I, be not afraid.

28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, ^u bid me come unto thee on the water.

29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, ^v he walked on the water, to go to Jesus;

30 But ^z when he saw the wind ^{*} boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, ^a Lord, save me.

31 And immediately Jesus ^b stretched forth ^{his} hand, ^c and caught him, and said unto him, ^d O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou ^e doubt?

32 And when they were ^f come into the ship, the wind ceased.

33 And when they were ^g come into the ship, the wind ceased.

file, (as we say;) so it appeared that five thousand men had thus been fed, besides women and children, who were arranged in a separate company. 'There was more real grandeur displayed by the Master of this feast, than by 'Ahasuerus in that royal feast, which was intended to show "the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honour of his excellent majesty." (Henry.)

V. 22-24. (Marg. Ref.) The multitudes, concluding Jesus to be the promised Messiah, purposed to make him their King; and as the apostles might be disposed to concur, our Lord constrained them to put to sea without him; and then he dismissed the people, who retired quietly to their own homes; and instead of resting after his fatigues, he retired to a mountain to pray. He had no sins to be pardoned or subdued; but he had manifold and immense services, temptations, and sufferings, before him; through which he was to pass, as man, in dependence on the divine power, truth, and love; he had the cause of his disciples, and that of his Church, to plead; his delight was in communion with the Father; and he acted as our Surety and Example. (Marg. Ref.) So that when the evening was come, or the day closed, he was on a mountain alone; and there he continued, during the greatest part of the night. In the mean time the disciples met with tempestuous weather and a contrary wind. 'We must sail even through mighty tempests; and Christ will never forsake us, so that we go whither he command us.' (Beza.)

V. 25-27. The fourth watch of the night began three hours before sun-rise; and during these three hours Jesus came to the disciples, perhaps after day-break. 'Note, that to walk on the sea is made the property of God, "who alone spreadeth the heavens." (Job ix. 8.) (Whitby.) — 'The picture of two feet walking on the sea was an Egyptian hieroglyphic for an impossible thing.' (Dodridge.) It was, no doubt, an attestation, that He was the God of nature, the Lord of the creation; and also an emblem of his power over all the troubles and persecutions

which disquiet his Church. The disciples, however, cried out for excess of terror, supposing that what they saw, was either the apparition of some deceased person foreboding evil, or an apostate spirit coming to do them some mischief. 'That the Jews had then an opinion of hurtful spirits walking in the night is evident, from the "seventy, who render, "from the pestilence walking in "darkness," from the fear of the devils, that walk in the "night." (Whitby.) To allay their terror, Jesus spake to the disciples with his usual voice, assuring them that it was he, their Lord and Friend.

V. 28-32. Peter from the first appears a man of integrity, who had very exalted thoughts of Christ, and a cordial affection to him, but of a sanguine temper, and not deeply acquainted with his own heart; he was therefore always most forward to speak, to propose, to object, or attempt. When he saw Christ walking on the sea, he found himself excited to a very high confidence, and he desired permission to come to him on the water; probably expecting a commendation of the strength of his faith. But our Lord, to show him his weakness, and to teach all his disciples many useful lessons, bade him come; and Peter without hesitation attempted to walk on the unstable waves! And as long as his faith was fixed upon the divine power of Christ, he was actually enabled to do it; but the boisterousness of the elements soon drew off his attention, and staggered his faith, and then he began to sink: yet still he relied on his Lord for deliverance in this extreme danger; and, in answer to his application, Jesus caught him by the hand, and brought him safe to the vessel; at the same time rebuking him, as one of little faith. 'By faith we tread under our feet even the tempests themselves; but yet by the virtue, (or power,) of Christ, who helpeth that virtue, which he of his mercy hath given.' (Beza.) Peter's doubting did not relate to his own acceptance, or final salvation, but to the power of Christ to preserve him from sinking. (Note, viii. 23-27.)

t ix 2. John xvi.

33. Acta xxiii.

11.

u Is. xli. 4. 10. 14.

11. 12 Luke

xxiv. 38. 39.

John vi 20. xiv.

1-3 Rev. 17. 16.

xxix 27. xxvi. 33

35. Mark xvi.

31. Luke xxi.

31-34 49. 50.

John vi. 68

xiii. 36-38.

Rom vii. 3

y xvi. 20. xxi. 21.

Mark ix. 23. x.

72. Luke xxi.

22. 23. Luke

xxii. 6. Acta i.

16. Rom iv. 15

Phil. iv. 13

z xxvi. 62-75.

2 Kings vi. 15

Mark xiv. 38. 66

54-56. John

xxiii 25-27.

2 Tim iv. 16.

17.

* Or, strong

a viii. 24. 25 Ps.

b vii. 7. Luke i.

c vii. 27-30

d cxvi. 3. 4. Lum.

iii. 54. 56. Job

e i. 2. 7. 2 Cor. xii. 7-10.

f Ps. cxxxviii 7. Mark i. 31. 41. v. 41

g Gen. xxi. 14. Deut. xxxii. 36. Mar. xvi. 7. Luke xxi. 31. 32. xiv. 34. 1 Pet. i. 5.

d viii. 28. xvi. 8. xvii. 20. Mark iv. 40. vi. 14. Luke xxi. 25

e xxi. 21. xxviii. 17

f 1. 5. 2. 7. 2 Cor. xii. 7-10.

g Gen. xxi. 14. Deut. xxxii. 36. Mar. xvi. 7. Luke xxi. 31. 32. xiv. 34. 1 Pet. i. 5.

h viii. 28. xvi. 8. xvii. 20. Mark iv. 40. vi. 14. Luke xxi. 25

i xxi. 21. xxviii. 17

j 1. 5. 2. 7. 2 Cor. xii. 7-10.

k Gen. xxi. 14. Deut. xxxii. 36. Mar. xvi. 7. Luke xxi. 31. 32. xiv. 34. 1 Pet. i. 5.

l viii. 28. xvi. 8. xvii. 20. Mark iv. 40. vi. 14. Luke xxi. 25

m xxi. 21. xxviii. 17

n 1. 5. 2. 7. 2 Cor. xii. 7-10.

o Gen. xxi. 14. Deut. xxxii. 36. Mar. xvi. 7. Luke xxi. 31. 32. xiv. 34. 1 Pet. i. 5.

p viii. 28. xvi. 8. xvii. 20. Mark iv. 40. vi. 14. Luke xxi. 25

q xxi. 21. xxviii. 17

r 1. 5. 2. 7. 2 Cor. xii. 7-10.

s Gen. xxi. 14. Deut. xxxii. 36. Mar. xvi. 7. Luke xxi. 31. 32. xiv. 34. 1 Pet. i. 5.

t viii. 28. xvi. 8. xvii. 20. Mark iv. 40. vi. 14. Luke xxi. 25

u xxi. 21. xxviii. 17

v 1. 5. 2. 7. 2 Cor. xii. 7-10.

w Gen. xxi. 14. Deut. xxxii. 36. Mar. xvi. 7. Luke xxi. 31. 32. xiv. 34. 1 Pet. i. 5.

x viii. 28. xvi. 8. xvii. 20. Mark iv. 40. vi. 14. Luke xxi. 25

y xxi. 21. xxviii. 17

z 1. 5. 2. 7. 2 Cor. xii. 7-10.

aa Gen. xxi. 14. Deut. xxxii. 36. Mar. xvi. 7. Luke xxi. 31. 32. xiv. 34. 1 Pet. i. 5.

ab viii. 28. xvi. 8. xvii. 20. Mark iv. 40. vi. 14. Luke xxi. 25

ac xxi. 21. xxviii. 17

ad 1. 5. 2. 7. 2 Cor. xii. 7-10.

ae Gen. xxi. 14. Deut. xxxii. 36. Mar. xvi. 7. Luke xxi. 31. 32. xiv. 34. 1 Pet. i. 5.

af viii. 28. xvi. 8. xvii. 20. Mark iv. 40. vi. 14. Luke xxi. 25

ag xxi. 21. xxviii. 17

ah 1. 5. 2. 7. 2 Cor. xii. 7-10.

ai Gen. xxi. 14. Deut. xxxii. 36. Mar. xvi. 7. Luke xxi. 31. 32. xiv. 34. 1 Pet. i. 5.

aj viii. 28. xvi. 8. xvii. 20. Mark iv. 40. vi. 14. Luke xxi. 25

ak xxi. 21. xxviii. 17

al 1. 5. 2. 7. 2 Cor. xii. 7-10.

am Gen. xxi. 14. Deut. xxxii. 36. Mar. xvi. 7. Luke xxi. 31. 32. xiv. 34. 1 Pet. i. 5.

an viii. 28. xvi. 8. xvii. 20. Mark iv. 40. vi. 14. Luke xxi. 25

ao xxi. 21. xxviii. 17

ap 1. 5. 2. 7. 2 Cor. xii. 7-10.

aq Gen. xxi. 14. Deut. xxxii. 36. Mar. xvi. 7. Luke xxi. 31. 32. xiv. 34. 1 Pet. i. 5.

ar viii. 28. xvi. 8. xvii. 20. Mark iv. 40. vi. 14. Luke xxi. 25

as xxi. 21. xxviii. 17

at 1. 5. 2. 7. 2 Cor. xii. 7-10.

au Gen. xxi. 14. Deut. xxxii. 36. Mar. xvi. 7. Luke xxi. 31. 32. xiv. 34. 1 Pet. i. 5.

av viii. 28. xvi. 8. xvii. 20. Mark iv. 40. vi. 14. Luke xxi. 25

aw xxi. 21. xxviii. 17

g. xv. 25. xxviii.
 9. 17 Luke xxvii.
 32.
 h. xvi. 16. xvii. 5.
 xxvi. 63. xxviii.
 43. 54. Ps. i. 7.
 Matt. i. 1. xi.
 61. xv. 39. Luke
 iv. 41. xviii. 28.
 John i. 42. vi.
 64. ix. 25-36.
 xi. 27. xvii. 1.
 xix. 7. Acts xiii.
 37. Rom. i. 4.
 i. Mark vi. 59-66

33 Then they that were in the ship came and ^aworshipped him, saying, ^bOf a truth thou art the Son of God.

34 ¶ And ^cwhen they were gone over, they came into the land of ^dGennesaret.

35 And when the men of that place

had knowledge of him, ^ethey sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased;

36 And besought him that they might ^fonly touch the ^ghem of his garment: and as many as touched were made ^hperfectly whole.

lv. 21, 25. Mark
 i. 20. 34. ii. 1.
 act. iii. 8-10.
 vi. 55.
 m. ix. 20, 21. Mark
 iii. 10. Luke vi.
 19. Acts xiii. 14,
 12.
 xxviii. 5. Ps.
 xxi. 19. 33. Ec.
 Num. xxi. 38,
 39.
 o. John vii. 21.
 Acts i. 16. lv.
 9. 10. 14-16.

V. 33. The apostles, who seem to have been more impressed with this than any of our Lord's preceding miracles, came with one accord, and prostrated themselves before him in adoration, declaring, that of a truth he was the Son of God; nor did he in the least decline the honour which they rendered to him.

V. 34-36. (*Marg. Ref.*) 'Gennesaret is the title of the whole province, which contained in it the lake so called.' (*Hammond.*) It is likely, that our Lord landed not far from Capernaum, (which, some think, was situated in the land of Gennesaret,) for he very soon went to that city. (*John vi. 24. 59.*) As the inhabitants had previous knowledge of Jesus, they flocked to him with their sick, who only desired leave to touch the *hem*, or *fringe*, of his garment; and as this was done in faith and expectation, they were all immediately and perfectly healed. 'In that Christ healeth the sick, we are given to understand, that we must seek remedy for spiritual diseases at his hand; and that we are bound not only to run ourselves, but also to bring others, to him.' (*Beza.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-5.

The terror and reproaches of conscience, which the most daring offenders cannot absolutely shake off, are both a demonstration of future judgment, and an anticipation of future misery. They who rebel against the light of God's word and their own convictions, and who quarrel with religion and its ministers, (contrary to their own better judgment,) for the sake of some favourite iniquity, which they are determined to retain, are frequently given up to judicial hardness of heart; and companions in licentiousness often tempt others to revenge and murder.—When the servants of Christ, by faithful reproofs, interfere with the sensual, interested, or ambitious schemes of abandoned transgressors, their resentment sometimes proves more powerful even than their most domineering passions: not only are *men* on these occasions regardless of equity, humanity, or truth, but *women* may be wrought up to such a pitch of fury and vengeance, as to thirst for blood more than for any of those objects to which they would otherwise be most addicted. Yet the man of God, being fully aware of these consequences, must rebuke the greatest with all authority, when fairly called to it. In doubtful matters, indeed, tenderness and caution, as well as prudence, are requisite: but when men live in evident evil, we must in no degree abet their delusion by connivance or silence; but must fairly deliver our message and discharge our consciences, declaring their conduct to be absolutely unlawful and inconsistent with all religion. This is the right-hand which must be cut off, if a man would be a

disciple, and save his soul from hell. Indeed we shall thus incur the reproach of rudeness and bigotry, and, from timid Christians, the censure of imprudence and want of courtesy; and if they, whom we thus counsel and reprove in love, do not profit, they will certainly be offended, and perhaps exasperated to persecution. Yet the Lord will honour us and bear us out; nor can our most powerful or enraged enemies proceed any further than he sees good: and even the fear of man, though it in many cases bringeth a snare, often restrains wicked men from acting out all the evil that is conceived in their hearts.

V. 6-12.

When malice is harboured, opportunities will be found to gratify it; and we have little ground from Scripture to favour those festive occasions, which are so celebrated in this vain world. When reflection is dissipated, and conscience stunned by clamorous mirth, and when the passions are inflamed by sensual indulgence, men easily accede to insidious proposals, or form rash engagements; and by yielding to the present emotion, ensure future and bitter repentance. It seems a general rule among the rich and great, (though it hath some honourable exceptions,) to reward men in an inverse proportion to the *value* of their services: so that no liberality is too great to be lavished on those who minister to indulgence and dissipation; useful employments are more niggardly encouraged; and endeavours to save their souls are recompensed by reproaches, contempt, or punishment! The vile occasions and impious manner in which oaths are often used, form another proof of men's contempt of God and religion. But how lamentable is the case of those young persons, whose parents are their tempters to impiety and vice; and who are urged on to the greatest enormities, even by regard to parental counsel and authority! Yet thousands have been thus tutored for destruction by those who were the instruments of their wretched existence, and whose guilt and punishment must be still more aggravated. Hasty measures are seldom wise: and could we see the predominant inclinations of many, who appear gentle, tender, and modest, we should be as much shocked, as if we had heard Salome's request, that the head of John might be brought to her in a charger. Men may be sorry, in doing those things which they are resolved to proceed with; for they grieve, that they must venture so much to gratify their inclinations: but they find, or pretend, some reason for getting over their scruples; and in this way they often more impose on themselves than on others. Rash oaths and bad companions are above all things to be avoided: if men are entangled by them, they ought rather to infringe the sinful oath, and to affront their wicked asso-

CHAP. XV.

Jesus reproves the Scribes and Pharisees, for setting their traditions above God's commandments; and exposes their hypocrisy, 1—9 He warns the people against their doctrine, and shows the source and nature

of defilement, 10—20. He tries the faith, and heals the daughter, of a woman of Canaan, 21—28; and heals numbers at the sea of Galilee, 29—31; and again feeds the multitude by miracle, 32—39.

ciates, than to add sin to sin, and ruin their own souls. The only wise God may see good to let the lives of his most valuable servants fall a sacrifice to the humours and passions of his vilest enemies: but death can never find them unprepared, or prevent them from finishing their work and testimony; and the manner is of small moment, when the conscience is at peace, hope assured, and God their Comforter; the more speedily, the less their sufferings commonly are. But how different will be the hour of death and the season of righteous retribution to their impenitent persecutors! Whoever is cut off, the Lord Jesus still liveth to take care of his cause; and when we have paid our tribute of respect and affection to his deceased servants, we must apply to him for support, and for directions about redoubled diligence in his service.

V. 14—21.

Though we should give place to the resentment of persecutors, and shun ostentation, yet we must not refuse to do good, for fear of trouble or reproach, or for the sake of ease and indulgence. In promoting the welfare of men's souls, we should have consideration and compassion for their bodies too, and endeavour to relieve their wants, and redress their inconveniences. Yet even disciples are prone to shift this from themselves to others, on various pretences, especially on that of poverty. But our Lord frequently, as it were, says to us, "They need not depart; give ye them to eat;" and a little, properly managed, and brought to him for his blessing, will go further than is commonly supposed. He does not in general give his disciples a great fund to begin with: but he disposes them to make a proper use of a little; and when this is done in the obedience of faith, it increases in their hands, and they are rather enriched, than impoverished, by liberality. They who serve Christ must not covet delicacies: he uses his power to feed, not to feast, his people: and whilst the rich recollect how he and his disciples fared, they should learn to spare from their own expenses to feed his poor; and the poor should learn to be contented with their mean food, which is seldom less luxurious than that with which the Saviour of the world was pleased to satisfy his hunger. We should all learn to thank God, and to crave his blessing at our meals; and to avoid all profusion and waste: remembering that our Lord would not suffer the fragments of this miraculous provision to be lost, and considering that frugality is the proper source of liberality. But we see also in this miracle an emblem of the Bread of life, which came down from heaven, to sustain our perishing souls: the provisions of his Gospel appear to the carnal eye mean and scanty; yet they suffice for the whole multitude, that feed on him in their hearts, by faith, with thanksgiving: and his ministers may go forth confidently to break this bread of life to their auditories;

assured that it will increase in their hands, and supply the wants of all who hunger; and that whilst they feed others, they will also enrich themselves.

V. 22—36.

Even in those places, to which the Lord hath evidently appointed us, we may expect storms and difficulties: and when we have not the sensible comfort of his presence amidst our conflicts, we may by faith realize his watchful eye over us, and his intercession continually made in our behalf; and we may rest assured, that, in due time, he will come to our relief. We should have more comfort, did we more copy his example in the days of his humiliation, and were more careful not to omit fervent constant prayer, on account of any engagements or interruptions. We are sometimes troubled at those incidents, which denote our deliverance; but our Lord beholds our fears, and will make himself known for our encouragement: and whatever danger or trouble may assail or alarm us in life, or at death, considering that all power is in our Redeemer's hands, and all events are ordered by his appointment, we may comfortably hear him, as it were, say to us in every one of them, "It is I, be not afraid." We find it hard to be very humble without dejection, or animated without self-complacency: but our faith is irregular, when it leads us to covet difficult or perilous services without a proper call. The Lord, however, often lets his servants have their choice, in order to humble and prove them, and to show the greatness of his power and grace. In the most perilous situation to which *He calls us*, if our faith be steadfastly fixed on his infinite power, truth, and love, we may proceed with safety and confidence. But when we look off from him, and view the greatness of opposing difficulties and perils, we begin to fall: yet, if we feel ourselves sinking under trouble, or temptation, or into destruction, and apply to him, he will stretch out the arm of his power to deliver us. But he will rebuke the weak believer, though he will not leave him to perish: and when we vainly expect a commendation of our wisdom and strength, we commonly are convicted of weakness and folly. We ought indeed to doubt, and to examine ourselves, whether we be true disciples or not: but we never should doubt of Christ's power to save and help all those that call upon him. The dangers, trials, and humiliations of the believer, will eventually render the Saviour more glorious in his eyes, and precious to his heart. Were men more acquainted with him, and with the distempered state of their souls, they would flock to him to experience his healing influence: for all that touch him, though with a feeble trembling faith, shall in due season be made perfectly whole: and whilst we consider all these wonders of his divine power and love, shall we refuse to adore him, or to acknowledge, that "of a truth He is the Son of God?"

a Mark vii. 1, &c.
b 20 xxiii. 2.
c Luke v.
30. A. la xxiii. 8.
d Luke v. 17, 21.

e Mark vii. 2 Gal.
3. 14 Col. ii. 8.
f 20—23. 1 Pet. i.
30.

g vii. 2—5 Mark c
vi. 6—8. 13

h vii. 10, v. 17—19.
i vii. 20, Rom.
vi. 31.

THEN ^a came to Jesus ^b Scribes and Pharisees, ^c which were of Jerusalem, saying,

2 Why do thy disciples ^d transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.

3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

4 For ^e God commanded, saying,

Honour thy father and mother; and He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.

5 But ^f ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father, or his mother, ^g It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;

6 And ^h honour not his father or his mother, ⁱ he shall be free. ^j Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

Ex. xix. 12, 20. xv.
12. Lev. xix. 3.
Deut. x. 16.
Prov. xxiii. 22.
Eph. vi. 1.
h 1 Pet. x. 17.
i Lev. xx. 9.
Deut. xx. 17.
j 2c xxiii. 16.
Prov. xx. 20.
xxx. 17.
xxiii. 16—18.
Am. vii. 15, 17.
Mark vi. 10, 13.
Acts i. 15, 29.
k 9c. xxvii. 9.
l 2c. Prov. xx. 25.
m Mark vii. 11, 12.
n 1 Tim. v. 3, 4.
o Ps. exix. 126.
127. 139. lxxviii. 51.
Rom. iii. 31.

8, 9. Hos. iv. 6. Mat. ii. 7—9. Mark vii. 13. Rom. iii. 31.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV. V. 1, 2. The report of Christ's miracles seems to have given great uneasiness to the Scribes and Pharisees at Jerusalem; and some of them had come in order to watch his conduct, and to seek for matter of accusation against him. But not finding that he, or his disciples, neglected any part of the divine law, they objected to him his disregard of the traditions of the Elders. It was pretended that these traditions were originally received from God by immediate revelation, and were of equal authority with the written law; that they had been delivered down by word of mouth from one to another, through successive generations: and thus the scribes, who were the supposed repositories and interpreters of them, had the power of altering them, and imposing them on the people, according to their convenience; in the same manner as the church of Rome long maintained its usurped authority, by dictating to the whole western Church under similar pretensions. 'Whosoever despiseth the washing of hands is worthy to be excommunicated, he comes to poverty, and will be extirpated out of the world.' 'He that eats bread with unwashed hands does as bad as if he committed whoredom.' 'R. Aquiba, being in prison, and not having water enough to drink and to wash his hands, chose to do the latter, saying, It was better to die with thirst, than transgress the traditions of the elders.' 'The religious of old did eat their common food in cleanness, and they were called Pharisees. And this is a matter of the highest sanctity, and the way of the highest religion, that a man separate himself, and go aside from the vulgar; and that he neither touch them, nor eat nor drink with them: for such separation conduceth to the purity of the body from evil works, and the purity of the body conduceth to the cleansing of the soul from evil affections, and the sanctity of the soul conduceth to the likeness of God.' 'Whosoever hath his seat in the land of Israel, and eateth his common food in cleanness, and speaks the holy language, and recites his phylacteries morning and evening, let him be confident that he shall obtain the life of the world to come.' (Jewish writers quoted by Whitby.)

V. 3—6. All additions to the laws of God are an infringement of his legislative authority, and a presumptuous imputation on his wisdom, as if he had omitted something necessary, which man could supply; and in one way or other, they always clash with the divine precepts: so that an attachment to human traditions necessarily leads men, in some circumstances, or in some respects, to dis-

obey God; and it is evident that our Lord had taught his disciples to disregard them. Doubtless they, at this time, observed the ceremonial distinction of meats, and other divine appointments. Our Lord therefore answered the Scribes, by asking them, "Why they transgressed God's commandments by their traditions?" "The words of the scribes are lovely above the words of the law, and more weighty than the words of the law, or of the prophets." (Quotation in Whitby.) Our Lord then selected one instance, in proof of this charge. The law, delivered from mount Sinai, and written on the tables of stone by God himself, contained this command. "Honour thy father and thy mother." "By honour is meant all kind of duty, which children owe to their parents." (Beza.) (Note, Ex. xx. 12.) And in the judicial law, he had commanded, that "he who cursed father or mother should be put to death." (Marg. Ref.) Now it must be as wicked to do evil to parents, or to withhold the good due to them, as to wish that evil might befall them; especially as this might be done in a sudden passion, and the other must be deliberate and habitual. Yet the Scribes had decided by their traditions, that in case a son should say to his parents, however aged, poor, and distressed, that he had vowed to the treasury whatever he could spare, and by which he might have assisted them, and should thus excuse himself from showing respect, gratitude, or kindness to them, leaving them in indigence, whilst he lived in plenty, he should not only not be required, but he ought not to be suffered, to do any thing for them; it being probably expected from him to put money from time to time into the treasury, (of which the Scribes and Priests had the charge,) by way of compensation for his omission. Thus, from a vain pretence of piety, they directly repealed God's law, and rendered it of none effect by their traditions: and as this was only one instance out of many, their traditions must be disregarded and opposed, in order that God's law might be honoured and obeyed. 'If a man can answer his parents, when they need any relief, and tell them, I have bound myself with an oath, that I will not do any thing to the relief of my father or mother: or, as some understand it, O father, that by which thou shouldst be relieved by me is a gift already devoted to God, and cannot without impiety be otherwise employed; and by this piety to God I may be as profitable to thee; for God will repay it to me and thee in our needs: he is under no obligation to give it to his father.' 'A father, being in want, requires relief from his son: the son answers, that he hath vowed he

u vii. 5. xxiii. 23

c. 29

c. Mark vi. 6. Act

p. 14. xxix. 13. Ez

xxix. 31. John

i. 47. Pet iii. 10

c. Prov. xlii. 26

Jer xii. 2. Act

viii. 21. Heb. iii.

12

c. Ex. xx. 7. Lev

xxvi. 16. 20

Sam. xxv. 21

Ps. xxxix. 6

Isa. li. 1. Eccl.

v. 7. 11-13. 15

viii. 1-3. Mal.

i. 11. Mark vii.

7. 1 Cor. xv. 2

Jam. ii. 20

c. Deut. xii. 32

Prov. xxx. 5. 6

Is. xlii. 13

Col. ii. 18-22. 1

Tim. i. 4. iv. 1

s. 6. 7. Tit. i. 14

Heb. xiii. 9. Rev

xxii. 18

c. 1 Kings xlii. 28

Mark vi. 14. 16. Luke

xv. 45-47. — u xiii. 19

xxiv. 15. Is vi. 9. 13

45. Eph. i. 17. 18. Col. i.

9. Jam. i. 5. — x Mark

vii. 15. Luke xi. 38-41

Acta x.

14. 15. xi. 8. 9. Rom

xii. 14. 17. 20. 1 Tim.

i. 4. 5. Tit. i. 15. Heb.

xiii. 9. 1 Cor. vii.

20. xii. 34-37. Ps. x.

7. au. 2. iii. 2-4. Iviii.

3. 4. 10. xxviii. 22.

ix. 3-5. 13-15. Jer.

ix. 3-6. Rom. iii. 13.

14. Jam. iii. 5-8

2 Pet. ii. 18.

7 Ye ^o hypocrites, ^o well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

8 This people ^o draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; ^a but their heart is far from me.

9 But ^o in vain they do worship me. ^a teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

10 And ^o he called the multitude, and said unto them, ^o Hear and understand:

11 Not ^o that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; ^v but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

12 ¶ Then came his disciples, and

said unto him, ^o Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?

13 But he answered and said, ^a Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

14 ^a Let them alone: ^o they be blind leaders of the blind. ^a And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

15 ¶ Then answered Peter, and said unto him, ^o Declare unto us this parable.

16 And Jesus said, ^o Are ye also yet without understanding?

17 Do ye not yet understand, ^o that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, ^b and is cast out into the draught?

* will not; so that to him it remains not lawful to relieve him; and the Pharisees approve this practice! Many cases are set down, wherein it doth so, in Maimonides and the Rabbins. (*Hammond.*) The pretence of devoting to God the property thus withheld from the parent, as the occasion of the oath, seems implied. 'A man may be so bound by them,' (vows), 'that he cannot, without great sin, do what God had by his law required to be done. So that if he made a vow, which laid him under a necessity to violate God's law, that he might observe it, his vow must stand, and the law be abrogated.' (*Jewish canon from Pocock.*) This, however, is sufficient to lead any reflecting person to conclude, that human traditions and the law of God cannot subsist together; but the prevalence of the former must inevitably lead to make void the latter: and that consideration shows the reason of our Lord's most decided opposition to the system of tradition.

V. 7-9. In concluding this reply, our Lord declared the Scribes and Pharisees to be mere hypocrites, whose character the prophet had well described. They approached God in his ordinances with good words, and honoured him with fair professions; but their hearts were estranged from his holy character, law, and service, through pride, avarice, and wickedness: so that their very worship was *vain* and unprofitable to themselves; even as their instructions were to the people, whilst they taught them the traditions of men, instead of God's word. The passage in the prophet seems to refer as much to the deluded people as to their false teachers. (*Note, Is. xxix. 13-16.*)

V. 10, 11. When Christ had thus answered the Scribes, he saw good to caution the people also against their delusions. He therefore called them around him, and bade them carefully to hear, that they might understand, his words: and he assured them, that the defilement of which they ought to be afraid did not arise from what entered the mouth as food, but from those evil words, which proceeded out of their mouths as the result of the wickedness of their hearts. This was an intimation of the inferior value of ceremonial observances, and of their,

speedy abolition; it cogently instructed them, that real pollution was not an adventitious matter from without, but the genuine produce of man's fallen nature; and that the tongue was one main instrument in venting and propagating it. 'A man may bring guilt upon himself, by eating what is pernicious to his health, or by excess in food or liquor; and a Jew might have done it, by eating what was forbidden by the law; yet in all these instances, the pollution would arise from the wickedness of the heart, and be just proportionable to it.' (*Dodridge.*) 'It is evident that, in our Lord's judgment, the whole multitude was capable of understanding those things which the Pharisees did not, and by which the traditions were overthrown.' (*Whitby.*)

V. 12-14. When our Lord had spoken these words, he retired; and the disciples came to him, apparently with much concern, to inform him how greatly the Pharisees were offended, or stumbled, by his direct attack on their traditions. To this he answered, that "Every plant, which his heavenly Father had not planted, should be rooted up:" meaning that the teaching and traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees, not being from God, must be destroyed, to make room for true religion; and it was therefore proper to expose them before all the people. But the words are an universal rule, in respect to teachers, doctrines, observances, and every thing relative to religion: all that is not from God has no authority or excellency, and cannot be of long duration; and true godliness can never prosper, till such weeds and suckers be extirpated, which draw away the nourishment from its root. As to the Scribes and Pharisees, they must be *let alone*, (vii. 6.) for whilst they pretended to guide others, they were most ignorant and deluded themselves; and they would fall into the pit of destruction, with their obstinate followers, as a blind leader of a blind man falls with him into a ditch, or into some mischief. 'Regard not what they say or do, seeing they say and do it out of the blindness of their minds.' 'Sometimes the vulgar are obliged not to believe or comply with the rules of their ecclesiastical superiors; because it is their duty never to follow them into the pit.' (*Whitby.*)

11. xii. 24. 1 Sam. xxiv. 14. 1 Sam. xxv. 3. Prov. vi. 12. x. 25. Luke xix. 22. Jam. iii. 6-10. Rev. xii. 5, 6. 1. Cor. v. 3. vi. 1. Prov. ix. 23. vi. 14. xxii. 15. Jer. xvii. 2. Mark vii. 21-23. Rom. iii. 10-19. vii. 18. viii. 7, 8. Gal. v. 19-21. Eph. ii. 3. Tit. ii. 2-6.

18 But ^a those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. 19 For ^a out of the heart proceed ^a evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

20 These are the things ^a which defile a man: ^a but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

21 ¶ Then Jesus went thence, ^a and departed unto the coast of ^b Tyre and Sidon.

22 And, behold, ^a a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, ^c Have mercy on me, O Lord, ^d thou ^e Son of David: ^f my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

23 But ^a he answered her not a word.

V. 15—20. Peter, hearing this answer, in the name of all the apostles, desired of Christ an explication of the parable which he had spoken: for probably it seemed to them contrary to the Mosaic law, as well as to the traditions of the Scribes. And Jesus, (having reproved their dulness,) proceeded to show them, that their food, (if not unlawful or intemperate,) could not by any contracted pollution defile them; for it entered not into the heart, and had no effect on the affections of the soul; but it went into the stomach, and all that was unsuitable to nourish the body was carried off by a regular process of nature, without communicating any sinful defilement. But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart: when lies, impiety, blasphemy, or wickedness, were uttered, corrupt nature expressed itself; and this defiled a man in the sight of God. Indeed, from the same corrupt source all kind of wickedness proceeded; such as, polluting, malicious, proud, or covetous imaginations, and corrupt perverse reasonings against God and true religion; and even murders, adulteries, and every species of lewdness, injustice, and impiety. These crimes were indeed perpetrated by the body; but they were conceived in the heart, and proved its desperate wickedness: this rendered men loathsome and filthy in God's sight; and not eating their meals with unwashen hands. Such things related only to natural decency, and were no part of religion.

V. 21—24. After this offence given to the Scribes, our Lord retired to the most remote part of the land, in the borders of Tyre and Sidon; and though he used proper means for concealing himself, his coming was soon known. For a woman of Canaan, a Syro-phenician, (probably descended from the ancient Canaanites, a remnant of whom had taken shelter in the adjacent regions,) heard of his miracles, and was convinced that he was the promised Messiah; having doubtless before this renounced idolatry and become a worshipper of the true God. (Marg. Ref.) She, being in distress, made earnest supplication to him, calling him Lord, and addressing him as the Son of David.

And his disciples came and besought him, saying, ^a Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24 But he answered and said, ^a I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25 Then ^a came she and ^a worshipped him, saying, ^b Lord, help me.

26 But he answered and said, ^c It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.

27 And she said, ^d Truth, Lord: ^e yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.

28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, ^a great is thy faith: ^b be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

Luke xiv. 5. Rom. iv. 19, 20. 2 Thes. i. 3. — viii. 13 ix. 29, 30. Mark v. 33, vii. 25, 30. ix. 23, 24. Luke vii. 9, 50. xviii. 42, 43. John iv. 50—53.

But he heard her with silence and apparent neglect, intending to prove and manifest the strength of her humble faith. The disciples, however, pitying her distress, or wearied with her importunity, requested him to grant her petition, and dismiss her; and, doubtless, in her hearing, he replied, that he was not sent to the Gentiles, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 25—28. The answer of our Lord, so far from offending this humble suppliant, excited her to redouble her expressions of reverence, falling down before him, and entreating him to help her. To this he answered, apparently with harshness, and in a manner that seemed to preclude all hope, saying, that it would be improper to rob the children of their bread, in order to feed the dogs. Thus the Jews used, proudly and contemptuously, to distinguish themselves from the Gentiles: and the woman might, and, if she had not been a very humble believer, she would, have taken great offence at this affronting distinction, disdaining the title of *dogs*, and altering her opinion of One, who had treated her most respectful address in a manner so contrary to her expectation. But she, (being conscious of personal unworthiness, and recollecting her Gentile extraction, and, above all, filled with the highest sentiments of the dignity, wisdom, and excellency of Christ,) submitted patiently and meekly to the mortifying distinction, and by a peculiar ingenuity turned it into a cogent argument in support of her petition. 'Truth, Lord,' said she, 'I am a vile sinner of the Gentiles, and have no claim to the privileges of God's people; but as the dogs eat the fragments of a plentiful table, without the children being at all injured, and thy power and mercy are so large, that thou canst heal my daughter, without it the least deducting from the blessings intended for thine Israel.' —Our Lord's purpose was now answered; and having openly commended the greatness of the woman's faith, notwithstanding all her disadvantages, he assured her that her daughter was healed, and in a manner which intimated that all her other desires were, or would be, granted.

h Mark vii 31
i iv 15 Josh xii 1
3 Chanaan
15 ix 1 Mark
1 16 Luke v
1 Lake of Gena-
reted John v.
1 20 xxi 1.
Tiberias
h v 1 xxi 2
i iv 23 24 xj 1
5 xiv 35, 36
15 xxv 5, 6
Mark 1, 32-34
xj 54-56 Luke
vi 17-19, vii
21, 22 Acts ii.
22, v, ix, 10
xix 11, 12.
m ix 33 Mark vii.
37
n xviii 8. Mark
ix 43. Luke
xix 13, 21.
o xxi 14 Acts xii.
2-11, xiv 8-10.
p x 8 Ps. 1 15
22 Mark vi 12
Luke vi 12
xviii 15-19
xxvii 43 John
ix 24.
q Gen. xxxii 29.
xxxi 1, 20, Marg.
Ec. xxiv 10.
r ix 35 xiv 11.
xv 31 Mark
vi 1, 2 ix 22
Luke vii 12.
s Heb. iv 15.
t i 40 xxvii 63
Acts xxvii 33.
u vi 32, 33. Luke xii 29, 30

29 ¶ And Jesus departed from thence and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there.

30 And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet: and he healed them:

31 Inasmuch that the multitude wondered when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.

32 Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.

33 And his disciples say unto him,

Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?

34 And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes.

35 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.

36 And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

37 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left, seven baskets full.

38 And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children.

39 And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.

y Num. xxi 25.
z 2 Kings iv.
42 3. Mark vi.
37 vii 4 8.
John vi 5-7.
z xiv 5. Luke
ix 13 John vi.
P, 2.
a xvi 9, 10
b Luke xlvii 41,
42 John xix 9,
10
c xiv 10 Mark
vi 30, 31 Luke
ix 14-16 John
vi 6.
d xxvi 26, 27.
1 Sam ix 13.
Luke xx 19.
John vi 11.
Acts xxvii 35.
Rom xiv 6.
1 Cor. x. 31.
1 Tim iv 5, 6.
e 33 xiv 20, 21.
Pe. evii 9. Luke
i 53.
f xvi 9, 10 Mark
viii 8, 9, 19-21

g xiv 22. Mark
viii 10.
h xiv 22. Mark
viii 10.
i xiv 22. Mark
viii 10.
j xiv 22. Mark
viii 10.
k xiv 22. Mark
viii 10.
l xiv 22. Mark
viii 10.
m xiv 22. Mark
viii 10.
n xiv 22. Mark
viii 10.
o xiv 22. Mark
viii 10.
p xiv 22. Mark
viii 10.
q xiv 22. Mark
viii 10.
r xiv 22. Mark
viii 10.
s xiv 22. Mark
viii 10.
t xiv 22. Mark
viii 10.
u xiv 22. Mark
viii 10.

V. 29. (Note, Mark vii. 31-37.)

V. 31. *Maimed, &c.* It is generally allowed, that this word in its primary meaning signifies such persons as had been deprived of their limbs; and the restoration of them may be considered as one of the most stupendous effects of our Lord's creating power. The word *καλός*, —*maimed*, does, in the strictest propriety, signify one whose hand or arm had been cut off, (xviii. 8. *Mark* ix. 43:) but it is sometimes applied to those who were only disabled in those parts. It is reasonable to suppose, that among the many *maimed*, who were brought on these occasions, there were some whose limbs had been cut off; and I think hardly any of the miracles of our Lord were more illustrious and amazing, than the recovery of such. (*Doddridge*.) Men that had lost their limbs. (*Hammond*.) The word is certainly used for one whose hand had been cut off, in the places referred to; but as no other instance is recorded, in which the maimed were made whole, many suppose, that persons disabled in their hands or arms are meant.

Glorified. They all, whether Jews or Gentiles, acknowledged this to be a wonderful work of mercy, wrought by the God of Israel, and such as no other god was able to do. (*Hammond*.)

V. 32-38. (Note, &c. xiv. 15-21.) The multitudes on this occasion continued with our Lord three days, or till the third day, so that they must have lodged out of doors two nights, which might be done in those warm climates; but it shows the earnestness, with which they listened to his instructions. It appears wonderful that the disciples should renew their objection, when Christ had declared his compassionate purpose of feeding the multitude; especially as their provision was something larger, and the number present not so great, as before. The word rendered *baskets* is different from that thus translated in the preceding chapter; and the same distinction is made in

the original, in all the places where either of these miracles is mentioned. Some think, that the word in this place signifies a much larger basket than the other, but others suppose exactly the contrary. It is the word used concerning St. Paul, when it is said, "The disciples let him down by the wall in a basket." (*Acts* ix, 25.)

V. 39. 'Dalmanutha,' (*Mark* viii. 10.) 'was a particular place within the bounds of Magdala.' (*Whitby*.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-9.

The most virulent enemies of vital godliness are often extremely tenacious of their own inventions, by which they dress up a vain pageant, to amuse their consciences, and to impose on the ignorant! The disciples of Christ are fully justified in disregarding the traditions of men, however sanctioned, by the opposition of those traditions in many things to the holy law of God. How thankful ought we to be for the written word of God, when oral traditions are so liable to error, perversion, and uncertainty! And never let us for a moment imagine, that the religion of the Bible can be improved by any possible additions, doctrinal or practical: but common sense will teach a candid inquirer to distinguish between those circumstances of worship, which every society must order for themselves, though none have a right to impose them on others; and those inventions, which corrupt the purity, destroy the simplicity, and deform the spiritual beauty, of religious worship. We should peculiarly advert to our Lord's regard to the due performance of relative duties, especially that of children to their parents. No forms, notions, subscriptions to charities, building chapels, or any thing else, that looks like faith, zeal, or piety, can prove that man a true Christian, who neglects to "honour his father and mother," or to supply their wants according

CHAP. XVI.

Jesus rebukes the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Sadducees, who required a sign from heaven; and refuses any but the sign of Jonas, 1—4. He warns the disciples against the leaven of these sects, explains his meaning, and reproves the disciples for unbelief and want of understanding, 5—12. The opinion of the

people concerning him, 13, 14. Peter's confession commended, 15—17. The foundation of the Church, and the power of the keys, 18—20. Jesus foretells his death and resurrection, and rebukes Peter for dissuading him from suffering, 21—23. He shows, that his disciples must deny themselves and suffer, in prospect of a future reward, 24—27. The speedy establishment of his kingdom, 28.

to his ability. To dispense with this or other duties, on such grounds, would be as unscriptural, as to say, "It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me." Indeed, temporal death is not now inflicted on him who curseth his parents; yet a far more dreadful punishment will be awarded hereafter to all disobedient children, if they continue impenitent; and they must expect no comfort or blessing from God even in this present world. Alas! too many draw near to God with their mouth, and honour him with their lips, whilst their hearts are far from him, and thus prove that they worship him in vain. And this is the case, not only among those who "teach for doctrines the commandments of men," but even with many who profess evangelical religion, yet neglect relative duties, and evidently commit iniquity and deceit!

V. 10.—20.

When professed teachers of religion contradict the word of God, it often becomes necessary, not only to answer their objections and arguments, but to point out their errors, and expose their ignorance to the people; and to call on them to hear and understand the truth. It is not, however, generally expedient for us to bring any decided charge of hypocrisy against our opponents, in the manner which became the heart-searching Saviour: yet we must by no means put either the honour of the clerical order, or our own reputation, in competition with the glory of God and the salvation of souls. But when Scribes and Pharisees are offended with plain truths, timid disciples will be concerned, and almost disposed to think that their bolder brethren go too far, even though in other things they honour them; especially when they see those exasperated, whom they had hopes of conciliating. We should, however, remember, that nothing in religion is of any value, except what God himself hath planted: nothing will endure in the soul, but the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit; nothing should be admitted into the Church, or be suffered to abide there, but what is of heavenly extraction: and therefore, if hypocrites be detected, false teachers offended, and professed friends changed into avowed enemies, by an open declaration of the truth, we should not be disconcerted; for the trees of righteousness will grow more fruitful, when such noxious plants are rooted up. If men quarrel with the word of Christ, we must let them alone, and not attempt to cast pearls before swine: yet it is grievous to reflect how the blind have, in every age of the Church, undertaken to lead the blind; and what numbers are thus continually plunging together

into the pit of destruction, in which the blind leader sinks the deepest, in proportion to the degree of his pride, enmity, and presumption! Yet as God hath sometimes opened the eyes of such blind guides, and changed them into faithful teachers, we should remember still to pray for them, as well as against their wickedness. In all our difficulties we should apply to Christ for instruction: and though he rebuke us for our want of understanding, yet he will continue to teach us, and his reproofs will tend to our humiliation and increased attention. When he teaches, he will certainly convince men that their sin and pollution originate from themselves, and not from external causes. He will show them the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the human heart: and whilst they perceive that all the wickedness of every kind, that hath filled and corrupted the earth, was the genuine produce of depraved nature, and that it would have been tenfold greater but for merciful restraints, they will be led to sec and feel, that all this exists in their own hearts, and might be educed from them by suitable temptations. He will teach them to trace all the streams of their own actual transgressions to this corrupt fountain; to watch the evil thoughts that rise within; to humble themselves for these defilements, and to seek to be cleansed from them, in "the fountain which he hath opened for sin and for uncleanness;" to consider inward sanctification as far more important than all forms and notions; and that even truth is no further valuable to them, than as it tends to purify their hearts and consciences.

V. 21—28.

Our divine Saviour is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever:" he yet sees good to vary the expressions of his love to those that wait on him. Sinners of every nation and description are alike welcome to his salvation, and he will in no wise cast out those that cry to him for mercy. Yet he can veil the compassions of his heart under a frowning countenance, not only to humble and prove those whom he loves, but to show the strength of their faith and the depth of their humility. In some cases the disciples may seem more compassionate than their Lord; but when the folly and selfishness of their pity, and the wisdom and mercy of his frowns and delays, come to be compared, the case will appear far otherwise; and the event will prove, that "he is rich in mercy to all them that call on him." Let then such as seek help from him, and receive no gracious answer, increase their importunity, and endeavour with heavenly skill to turn even their

av 20. 11. 1. xii.
14. xv. 1. xxi.
15. 34. xxi. 2.
xviii. 62.
1. 6. 11. iii. 7. 9.
xii. 23. Mark
xii. 18. Luke x.
27. Acts. i. v.
17. xxi. 6-8.
c. x. 3. kxi. 18.
35. Mark x. 2.
xii. 15. Luke x.
29. xi. 10. 33. 34.
xx. 23. John
viii. 6.
c. x. 39. 39. Mark
viii. 11-13. Luke
xi. 16. 29. 30. John
vi. 30. 31. 1 Cor. i. 22

THE ^a Pharisees also, with the ^b Sadducees, came, and, ^c tempting, desired him that he would shew them ^a a sign from heaven.

2 He answered and said unto them,

^e When it is evening, ye say, *It will be fair weather; for the sky is red.*

3 And in the morning, *It will be foul*

weather to-day; for the sky is red and lowering. ^b O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern ^c the signs of the times?

4 A ^b wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign: and there shall no sign be given unto it, ^a but the sign of the prophet Jonas. ^b And he left them, and departed.

1 vii. 5. xv. 7. xxi. 18. xxi. 1. Luke xi. 44. xii. 15. i. v. 23. xi. 5. 1. Chr. xii. 32. b. xii. 55. 40. Mark viii. 12. 38. Acts ii. 40. 1. 3. 1. 17. Luke xi. 29. 30. k. x. 14. Gra. vi. 17. Hos. iv. 17. ix. 12. Mark v. 17. 18. Acts xviii. 6, 7.

unworthiness and discouragements into arguments, with which to plead before his mercy-seat. Let sinners submit without reserve to every humiliating charge, and rely on his mercy. Thus, whilst they allow that they are not worthy of the crumbs from his table, they may expect to be supplied with children's food; for he cannot be impoverished by his bounty to the vilest transgressors. Indeed, true faith gathers strength by trials, as healthy bodies do by exercise: and when the Lord hath sufficiently proved the waiting soul, he will honour faith and humble perseverance, and abundantly answer every believing prayer.—We should entreat him for our children, relatives, and neighbours; especially, when, through the oppression of the devil, they are incapable of seeking help for themselves; and we should never fail to intercede with him for discouraged souls.

V. 29—39.

Who can describe the sentiments of these persons, who, without any dangerous or painful operation, found themselves in a moment restored, beyond all the efforts of nature, and beyond all the prospects of hope? With what pleasure did the ear, which had been just opened, listen to the pleasing accents of his instructive tongue! How did the lame leap around him for joy! And the maimed extend their recovered hands in grateful acknowledgments of his new-creating power! Whilst the voice of the dumb sang forth his praises in sounds before unknown! And the eye of the blind checked the curiosity, which would have prompted it to range over the various and beautiful objects of unveiled nature, to fix its rapturous regards on the gracious countenance of Him that had given it the day! Let us further reflect, with what correspondent pleasure must our Lord survey these grateful and astonished creatures, while his benevolent heart took its share in all the delight that he gave! These trophies of his greatness! How unlike to those of the field, the monuments of slaughter and devastation! (Doddridge.) With what raptures then will they, whose souls have been restored to holiness by his healing grace, for ever contemplate and adore their divine Benefactor, and meditate on the price which he paid for their redemption! And how will he for ever behold them with immense complacency, and delight over them to do them good! Let us then wait on him to open our eyes, that we may behold his glory; to enable us to walk in his ways and do his will; and to teach us to show forth his praises, that the Father may be glorified in him, and in us, during life, and for ever. And let us copy his example of love,

according to the ability that he hath given us, delighting to do good and to communicate felicity. Whilst we are willing to endure hardship, in attending to the concerns of our souls, we may be sure that our gracious Lord will compassionate us under all our troubles, and supply what he sees needful for our temporal support. But, alas! how soon do even believers forget his interpositions in their behalf! How often do we repeat our objections against self-denying and expensive duties, though we never yet were losers by them! And how frequently do our unbelieving doubts revive under even lighter trials, after we have been delivered out of greater! Lord, increase our faith, and pardon our unbelief; and still renew thy mercies towards us; teaching us to live upon thy fulness and bounty, for all things pertaining to this world and to that which is to come.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI. V. 1—4. (Notes, &c. xii. 38—40.

Mark viii. 11—13. Luke xii. 54—57.) No two descriptions of men could be much more opposite to each other, in principles and conduct, than the Pharisees and Sadducees; yet they were alike enemies to Jesus! 'The wicked, which otherwise are at defiance one with another, can agree well together against Christ: but do what they can, Christ beareth away the victory, and triumpheth over them.' (Besa.) They could find no objection against his conduct and doctrine, but what he answered to their confusion; and they therefore came insidiously to make trial of his power, again desiring a sign from heaven, to satisfy them that he was the Messiah, of which they pretended his other miracles were not a sufficient proof. The descent of the Holy Ghost on him at his baptism, and the voice of the Father declaring him to be his beloved Son, were signs from heaven: yet they required some further evidence, and probably intended to mention some particular sign, or appearance in the heavens, without which they could not be convinced; purposing thus to make trial of his power. To this our Lord answered, that they conjectured what kind of weather it was likely to be, from their observations on the clouds and sky: and if they had not been hypocrites in these inquiries, they might as easily, and far more certainly, have discerned the signs of the times. The sceptre was now departing from Judah; Daniel's seventy weeks were terminating; John Baptist's ministry, as the predicted forerunner of the Messiah, evidenced his approach; and all the prophecies were fulfilling in his character, doctrine, and miracles: so that it was plain these were the times of the Messiah, and that the nation was about to be given up for rejecting him. Having therefore again reproved them as a wicked and

1 xv. 39. Mark
viii 13, 14.

m Luke xli. 15.

l 12 Ex xii. 15
— 19 Lev. ii. 11
Mark viii. 15.
13. xii. 1. 1
Cor v. 8. Gal.
v. 9. 2 Tim. ii.
17.

p Mark viii. 16—
18. ix. 10. Luke
ix. 46.

q xv. 16—18.
Acts x. 14.

r John ii. 24. 25.
xvi. 30. Heb. iv.
13. Rev. ii. 23.

s vi. 30. viii. 25.
zic. 21. Mark
xvii. 14.

t xv. 16, 17. Mark
viii. 16.
xvi. 25—27.
Rev. iii. 19.

u xvi. 17—21.
Mark vi. 36—44.
Luke ix. 13—17.

v x. 34. 38—
40. Mark viii. 9—
17—21.

y Mark iv. 40.
viii. 21. Luke
xv. 36. John
viii. 43.

5 ¶ And when his disciples ¹were come on the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.

6 Then Jesus said unto them, ^mTake heed, and beware of ^athe leaven of ^othe Pharisees, and of the Sadducees.

7 And ^pthey reasoned among themselves, saying, ^aIt is because we have taken no bread.

8 Which ^rwhen Jesus perceived, he said unto them, ^oO ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?

9 Do ^tye not yet understand, neither remember ^uthe five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

10 Neither ^vthe seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

11 How ^yis it that ye do not under-

stand that I spake ^uit not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

12 Then understood they how that he bade ^uthem not beware of the leaven of bread, ^obut of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

13 ¶ When Jesus ^acame into the coasts of ^bCæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, ^cWhom do men say that ^aI, the Son of man, am?

14 And they said, Some say that thou art ^oJohn the Baptist; some, ^rElias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, ^sBut whom say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, ^hThou art the Christ, the Son of ⁱthe living God.

x xv. 4—9. xxi. 13. 22. Act.
xxiii. 8.
xv. 21. Acts x.
38.
b Mark viii. 27.
c Luke ix. 18.
d viii. 20. ix. 6.
xii. 8. 32. 40.
xiii. 37. 41. xxv.
31. Dan. vii. 13.
Mark viii. 28.
x. 48. John i.
51. iii. 14. v. 27.
xvi. 34. Acts vii.
36. Heb. ii. 14.
— 18.
e xiv. 2. Mark
viii. 28. Luke
ix. 18.
f Mal. iv. 5. Mark
vi. 15. Luke ix.
8. 19. John vii.
12. 40. 41. ix. 17.
g xli. 11. Mark
viii. 29. Luke
ix. 20.
h xiv. 33. xxvi.
64. xxvii. 54. Ps.
li. 7. Mark xiv.
61. John i. 49.
vi. 65. xi. 27.
xx. 31. Acts vii.
37. 50. Rom.
i. 4. Heb. i. 2—
5. 1 John iv. 15.
v. 56. 20.
i 1 Deut. v. 56. Ps.
xlii. 2. Dan. vi.
26. Acts xiv. 15.
1 Thes. i. 9.

adulterous generation, (*Marg. Ref.*) and refused them any other sign but that of Jonas, the type of his death, and resurrection, he left them to their perverseness. ^aO ye hypocrites, can ye prognosticate fair or foul weather by ^athe face of the sky? and can ye not, by those clear ^apredictions of the prophets, and the miraculous demonstrations of my power, discern the time of my coming? (*Bp. Hall.*) ^aIt was never known, that any one pretending to be a prophet laid the foundation of the truth ^aof his pretensions upon his being despised and rejected, ^aand even crucified as a deceiver, by them to whom he was ^asent, and among whom he performed all his miracles; ^aand upon what should be done by others at his death; ^aand upon what he should do after his resurrection. (*Whitby.*) Yet this our Lord did repeatedly and openly, so that his enemies were well aware of it!

V. 5—12. The disciples, taken up with more important concerns, had forgotten to take bread; and the fragments of their late miraculous meal being consumed, they had only one loaf remaining. Whilst uneasy on this account, Jesus, with reference to what had lately passed, warned them most cautiously to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians, (*Marg. Ref.*) meaning their hypocrisy, infidelity, corrupt doctrine, vain traditions, and proud enmity against the truth; which soured and corrupted all that they did. But the disciples supposed that he referred to their want of bread, and that he cautioned them against obtaining any from the Pharisees or Sadducees, as if they polluted every thing which they touched; which troubled and perplexed them. Our Lord therefore, knowing what they were discoursing of, re-proved their weakness of faith; as they might confidently have relied on his power to provide for them, if they had properly understood and kept in mind the miracles which they had recently witnessed, in the feeding of the multitudes with so small a provision, and in the quantity that

was left. He also reproved them for not understanding, that he had reference to matters far more important than the leaven of bread, which he had before taught them could not defile men. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 13—16. (*Marg. Ref.*) Cæsarea Philippi is supposed by some to have been the same place that anciently had been called Laish, or Dan; and it lay in the northern extremity of the land, within the Tetrarchy of Philip, Herod's brother. He had rebuilt this city, and called it Cæsarea, in honour of Tiberius Cæsar, the Roman Emperor; and had added his own name to it, to distinguish it from another Cæsarea, a much greater city in a more southern part of the land, which king Herod rebuilt and called thus, in honour of Augustus Cæsar. Our Lord seems to have gone thither, for the sake of retirement and discourse with his disciples: and he inquired of them, what sentiments the people entertained of him, who appeared as the Son of man among them, but who gave abundant proof that he was a very extraordinary person? To this they answered, that some, who had but lately heard of his miracles, supposed that John Baptist was risen again; others thought he was Elijah, the forerunner of the Messiah; and others imagined he was one of the ancient prophets risen again. Many thought Jesus a deceiver: but they, who esteemed him more highly, had very inadequate apprehensions of his real dignity. He then asked them what their sentiments of him were? And this was evidently the drift of the former question. To which Peter, with his usual promptitude, replied, in his own name and in that of his brethren, that they were assured of his being the promised Messiah, and "the Son of the living God." The apostles had not long before worshipped Christ as the Son of God, (*Note*, xiv. 33.) and their repeated confessions, to the same effect, show what their habitual judgment was on this subject. Some think that they only meant to say that he was the Messiah;

u Acts ii. 14, &c.
 x. xxi. c. 9, 7.
 x. xxi. c. 9, 7.
 1. 15. iii. 7. 15.
 1. x. i. 1.
 x. xxi. 16 John
 x. 22. 1 Cor
 7. 4. 5. 2 Cor
 10. 1. 1 Thes. iv.
 1. Rev. xii. 6.

19 And I will "give unto thee" the keys of the kingdom of heaven: "and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

'policy—authority in the world, no, not death and the grave, which are proverbially irresistible, (*Cant.* viii. 6.) 'shall be able to destroy this fabric. *The Church* signifies particular persons, (believers, true faithful Christians,) of which the Church consists, or the whole congregation or society of men. Though Christians 'shall die, yet death shall have no dominion over them: 'Christ shall break open those bars.' The whole congregation of Christian professors shall never be destroyed; —if it 'perishes in one place, it shall revive in others.' (*Hammond.*) Considered as a prophecy, this has been most wonderfully accomplished, during almost eighteen hundred years; for a vast proportion of which, the professed friends of the Church have combined with her avowed enemies, to destroy her, by power and policy, by persecution and heresies, and by every imaginable way: but all in vain. The gates of hell have not prevailed, and shall not prevail, against her. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, "but Christ's words shall not pass away." Let it be remarked, that our Lord says, "I will build, &c.," but the Church is God's building. (*1 Cor.* iii. 9.)

P. 19. Our Lord next stated the authority with which Peter would be invested. He had spoken in the name of his brethren as well as in his own; and doubtless this related to them as well as to him: but he might be especially addressed, as he first preached the Gospel, after Christ's ascension, both to the Jews, and to the Gentiles: thus opening the kingdom of heaven, as it were, to them both, in which it was impossible that any successor could share with him. Keys were an ancient emblem of authority: (*Note.* *Is.* xxii. *Rev.* iii. 7, 8.) The expression doubtless immediately related to the authority, by which the apostles were employed as the representatives of Christ, or principal ministers of his kingdom. (*John* xx. 19—23.) They were endued with the Holy Spirit, that they might infallibly declare his truth to mankind, and determine what was binding on the conscience, and what not: to show what persons ought to be admitted into the Church, or excluded from it; to decide on the characters of those whose sins were forgiven, or the contrary; and whatever in these, and similar respects, they bound on earth, would be bound in heaven, &c. The apostles themselves had not an infallible insight into the characters of men, and they were liable to mistakes and sins in their own conduct. But they were infallibly preserved from error, in stating the way of acceptance and salvation, the rule of obedience, the believer's character and experience, and the final doom of unbelievers, hypocrites, and apostates. In such things their decision was absolute, and ratified in heaven, as all will find that despise it. In this respect their apostolical authority continues in their doctrine, as transmitted to us in the New Testament: but all other ministers, of whatever rank, name, or age, can do no more than

20 Then "charged he his disciples, that they should tell no man that he was "Jesus the Christ.

21 "From that time forth "began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer

—34 Luke ix. 22 31. 44, 45. xviii. 31—34. xxiv. 1, 7, 27. 46

declare their doctrine, and apply it to particular cases, by preaching the word, administering divine ordinances, admitting men into the visible Church, or excluding them from it, or by personal encouragement and warning. As far as they proceed according to the Scripture in these things, their decisions are warranted and ratified in heaven: but not when they mistake either in doctrine, or in its application to particular persons or characters. As no man can see another's heart: and as no man hath any inherent power to forgive sin, or the contrary: so all pretensions absolutely to absolve, or to retain men's sins, claim more than even apostolical authority: for surely none can suppose that any man is made a true believer, or a hypocrite, by the erroneous decision of another concerning him! —We say, that Christ hath given to his ministers power 'to bind, to loose, to open, to shut, and that the office of 'loosing consisteth in this: either (1.) that the minister, 'by the preaching of the Gospel offereth the merits of 'Christ and full pardon to such as have lowly and contrite hearts, and do unfeignedly repent themselves; pronouncing unto the same a sure and undoubted forgiveness of their sins, and hope of everlasting salvation; or else, (2.) that the same minister, when any have offended their brother's minds with some great offence or notable and open crime, whereby they have, as it were, banished, and made themselves strangers from, the common fellowship, and from the body of Christ, then, after perfect amendment of such persons, doth reconcile them, and bring them home again, and restore them to the company and unity of the faithful. We say also, that the minister doth execute the authority of binding and shutting, (1.) as often as he shutteth up the gate of the kingdom of heaven against unbelieving and stubborn persons, denouncing unto them God's vengeance and everlasting punishment. Or else, (2.) when he doth shut them out from the bosom of the Church by open excommunication. —Out of doubt, what sentence exerts the minister of God shall give in this sort, God himself doth so well allow it, that whatsoever here on earth is loosed and bound, God himself will loose and bind, and confirm the same in heaven. And, touching the keys where-with they may either open or shut the kingdom of heaven, we, with Chrysostom say, they may be the knowledge of the Scriptures: with Tertullian, we say, the interpretation of the law, (or word of God,) and with Eusebius, we call them the word of God. (*Bp. Jewel.*)

V. 20. Our Lord, having opened these things in confidence to his disciples, charged them not to speak to others concerning his being the Messiah. Let them collect it from the fulfilment of prophecy, and in his miracles and doctrine; but the time for an explicit declaration of it was not yet come.

many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, * Be it far from thee, Lord : this shall not be unto thee.

23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, ' Get thee behind me. * Satan : ' thou art an offence unto me : for ' thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, ' If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, ' and take up his cross, and follow me.

V. 21—23. (*Marg. Ref.*) The apostles probably were at this time in expectation of their Lord's appearing in external glory, as the King of Israel : but on the contrary, he began to show them more openly than before, that he must go up to Jerusalem, to suffer many things from those in authority, and even to be put to death ; but that on the third day he should rise again. Thus he proceeded to bring them acquainted with his priestly office, and to prepare their minds for those trying scenes which they were about to witness. But Peter, who had overlooked all those prophecies that related to the Messiah's sufferings, and who probably was elated by the commendation bestowed on him, took him aside, or *by the hand*, and with a mixture of affection and ignorance, expressed to him his desire and hope, that it should not be so with him. The words are rendered by some, *Spare thyself*, by others, *Mercy be unto thee*, or I hope and pray thou wilt be more favourably dealt with, and that this shall not happen to thee. Our version, however, seems very fairly to give the true import of them. Thus Peter soon showed how unfit he was to be the rock, on which the Church was to be builded. Accordingly Christ turned, and rebuked him in the very terms which he had used in repelling the devil's temptations. (*Luke iv. 8.*) Some wish to soften the apparent harshness of the expression : but doubtless Christ intended to show, that on this occasion Satan spake by Peter, and used him, (beside his purpose,) as an instrument in tempting him to shun the cross. It was therefore proper to recognize Satan, as well as Peter, in the suggestion. Satan tempted Christ by Peter, as he did Eve by the serpent, and Adam by Eve. Thus Peter was an offence and *stumbling block* to Jesus, which must be removed by his being brought to a better judgment : for in this instance he spake as a *carnal man*, who did not properly value, or *relish*, the spiritual excellency of divine things ; but was more disposed to prize and choose the things of men, such as ease, indulgence, honour, and riches, than to understand the doctrine of redemption and the glory of God in it.

V. 24—28. (*Marg. Ref.*) Our Lord next proceeded to remind the apostles what they must expect in following him. (x. 38, 39.) He was indeed shortly to enter into his glory : but if any of them desired to come after him

25 For ^m whosoever will save his life shall lose it : and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.

26 For ⁿ what is a man profited, if he shall ^o gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? ^p or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?

27 For ^q the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, ^r with his angels ; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

28 Verily I say unto you, ' There be some standing here, which shall not ^s taste of death, till they ^t see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

thither, and to share the privileges of his kingdom, he must first learn from his example to deny himself, take up his cross, and follow him : he must habituate himself to give a flat denial to the most clamorous solicitations of his pride, ambition, avarice, and carnal self-love ; and to inure every selfish inclination to submission : he must also be prepared in mind, to carry his cross, as a condemned person, to the place of execution ; determined rather to be nailed to it, and there expire, than to renounce his Lord, who had thus suffered an excruciating and ignominious death for his sins. And if any man should determine to save his life, even by denying Christ, he would certainly forfeit the eternal life of his soul, which would be ensured to those that should lay down their lives for his sake. To this Jesus subjoined two most interesting questions, which are supposed to have been proverbial among the Jews. What would that man be profited, who should gain the possession of the whole world, all its riches, power, and splendour, but at the same time should lose *his own life*, in doing it ? Or what could be deemed an adequate price to be given a man in exchange for his life, if that should be lost or forfeited ? If then all worldly things were worthless when compared with temporal life ; how forcibly must the same argument conclude in respect of the *soul*, and its state of eternal happiness or misery ! If a man should save his life, and gain the whole world, by apostasy from Christ, and thus lose the happiness, and ensure the destruction, of his soul, where would be his gain ? Or with what would he endeavour to redeem his forfeited felicity, or to rescue his soul from deserved misery ? The Saviour indeed at this time appeared as the Son of man, in a state of humiliation, and was about to set them an example of patient suffering even unto death. He assured them that he would at length appear in the glory of his Father, displaying the divine perfections of power, wisdom, justice, truth, and mercy ; exercising sovereign authority over all creatures ; and attended with the holy angels as his servants : then he would *graciously* reward his disciples for all their self-denying and patient sufferings for his sake, and execute *righteous* vengeance on his enemies ; thus rendering to believers and unbelievers according to their works. And, though this event was

CHAP. XVII.

The transfiguration of Christ, who discourses with Moses and Elias, before Peter, James, and John, 1—8. He charges them not to make it known, and instructs them concerning the coming of

Elias, 9—13. He casts out an evil spirit, and reproves the unbelief of the people and of the disciples, 14—21. He foretells his death and resurrection, 22, 23; and pays tribute with money obtained by a miracle, 24—27.

distant, yet, verily, some there present would certainly be preserved from death, notwithstanding all their persecutions, till they saw him come to set up his kingdom in a glorious manner. This referred especially to the destruction of Jerusalem and the abolition of the Mosaic dispensation, when Christ came in his kingdom to destroy his most inveterate enemies.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—12.

Ungodly men of opposite sentiments and parties are united under one common head, and engaged in one common opposition to the cause of Christ: and infidels, Pharisees, and time-servers, often defer their subordinate controversies, that they may join their subtlety and influence in opposing the word of God. Men frequently discover great ingenuity and sagacity: they make accurate observations, and deduce just inferences, in matters of a temporal nature; yet, when they turn their minds to spiritual subjects, they seem incapable of understanding the plainest truths, which run counter to their interests and prejudices. And many are constrained to act on probable evidence, in their most important secular concerns, who perversely demand demonstration in every thing relating to Religion; nay, refuse to be satisfied with demonstration itself! But Christ will convict such disingenuous prevaricators; and in the mean time it is commonly best for us to leave them, and not to waste our time, or give them a handle, by disputing with them. We should not neglect our temporal concerns, in attending to those of our souls: yet if any are betrayed into it occasionally, through great earnestness about spiritual things, they need not fear but the Lord will provide for them. Our main concern should be to beware of false teachers and false doctrine; and to avoid the leaven of hypocrisy, pride, and infidelity, which diffuse their baneful influence on every side; yet even disciples are sometimes more anxious concerning the supply of their wants, than about keeping at a distance from error and sin! This arises from weakness of faith, and will expose them to rebukes. Should the Lord interrogate us, under many of our despondings, concerning our past experience of his power, truth, and love; he would soon show us what cause we have to be ashamed of our present distrust and solicitude; and force us to confess, that we did not properly understand and remember his former interpositions in our favour. But it is well, if we learn to profit by our own dulness and mistakes; and are made more attentive to his instructions.

V. 13—20.

We often foolishly want to know what men say of us, expecting perhaps some flattering report; and this com-

monly tends to our vexation, or temptation to resentment or discontent: but our blessed Lord had holy and important reasons for making his inquiry; and we ought to imitate his manner of grafting instructive observations on every topic of conversation. There are various opinions concerning the Lord Jesus; and they who think the most honourably of him, come nearest to the truth: but none can be his true disciples, who hesitate to confess, "that he is the Christ the Son of the living God," or who labour to explain away the meaning of such emphatical words. Happy are they, who confess this from an understanding and believing heart! Whatever may be their present errors and infirmities, or their future trials and temptations, they certainly are specially favoured by the Lord: for, human teaching *alone* hath not given them this knowledge of the truth, but it is the gift of their heavenly Father, and an earnest of further favours. We should then learn to make candid allowances for inquirers, who seem to have an honest and teachable spirit, but are yet strangers to many important truths: for not the doctrines known and believed, but the origin and nature of their faith and knowledge, distinguish the disciples from other men. The Person and work of Christ, the Son of God, is the Rock, on which alone the Church is built; and let the powers of darkness plot and rage, let infidels and heretics revile and menace as they will; they will never be able to subvert this foundation, or to destroy one soul that rests his hope upon it. We have not at present such authority as was intrusted to the apostles, and none can forgive sins but God only: yet let no man despise the declarations and censures of faithful ministers; for as far as they agree with the word of God, they will be ratified in heaven; whether they pronounce the penitent and believing to be fully pardoned, or the unbelieving and hypocritical under the wrath of God.

V. 21—23.

We should not so look to one part of the Redeemer's character, as to overlook another; but should keep in view at once the depth of his voluntary humiliation and sufferings as our great High Priest, and the height of his exaltation as our glorious King. In like manner we should connect our view of the believer's privileges, with that of his duty, and the cross which he must bear in the way to glory. But it often happens, that men speak so excellently of one part of Christianity, as to be entitled to commendation; and yet betray their ignorance and carnal prejudices, when they give their sentiments on other subjects, and so lay themselves open to deserved rebukes. They who would dissuade us from self-denying duties, or set us against the cross, should in that respect be considered as adversaries; and in all carnal counsellors we should recognize the voice of Satan, whose policy it is to

a Mark. c. 2.
 Luke, 20.
 b xxv. 17. Mark
 xv. 7. Luke xiv.
 51. Cor. xii. 1.
 c 2 Pet. i. 18.

AND ^a after six days Jesus taketh ^b Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into ^c an high mountain apart,

2 And was ^d transfigured before them: and ^e his face did shine as the sun, and his ^f raiment was white as the light.

a. Acts xxvi. 13-15. Rev. i. 13-17. x. i. xix. 12. 13. xx. 11. — f Ps. civ. 2. Mark ix. 3.

a Luke ix. 20.
 Rom. x. 1. 2.
 Phil. i. 6. 7. 6r.
 xxv. 11. 12. 13.
 xxvi. 2. 3b.
 John i. 14. xvii.
 f Ps. civ. 2. Mark

tempt us by those whom we love, and who are in other things most worthy of our esteem. We must not partly with such as are an offence to us, but decidedly reject their sollicitations; showing them that their false tenderness springs from their not savouring the things of God, but those of men. But what repeated instructions do we need, to teach us to deny ourselves, and to copy the example of our suffering Redeemer! and to convince us that every disciple must have the spirit of a martyr, whether it ever be put to the trial, or not! If life is so valuable, that the whole world is a paltry compensation for the loss of it, and unworthy to be given in exchange for it, what words can describe, or computations reach, the worth of an immortal soul? It is the noblest work of God below, formed at first in his own image, possessed of vast and most valuable powers, capable of most exquisite happiness or misery, and intended for eternal existence? Such an invaluable treasure every man is possessed of; but how few seem sensible of its preciousness, or of the danger of losing it! This consists in the final loss of God's favour, deprivation of his image, and banishment from his presence, in the regions of darkness, misery and despair. The souls of all men are in themselves thus lost, by transgression of the holy law of our Creator: yet, through the mercy of the Lord Jesus, none will eventually perish but the impenitent and unbelieving. Could any man therefore obtain the whole world, and the sure enjoyment of it during a thousand years, as his recompense for neglecting the salvation of the Gospel, he would through the countless ages of eternity curse his own folly, in making so mad a bargain. Yet millions lose their souls for the sake of the most trivial gain, or the most worthless indulgence, nay, from mere sloth and negligence! for whatever the object be, for which men refuse or forsake Christ, that is the price at which Satan purchases their souls. But, alas! we are all prone to believe the soothing lies of that cruel murderer and his emissaries, and to disbelieve the alarming truths of God and his ministers: we are disposed to procrastinate, or to take it for granted that all is well, when it is far otherwise: and therefore men lose their souls for a thing of nought! But what can they give in exchange for them? Alas! death reduces the wealthiest sinner to the level of the meanest beggar, and he hath nought to give. The dying transgressor cannot, with all his ill-gotten treasure, purchase one hour's respite in order to seek the mercy of his offended God. The whole world in this case is of no value: "it costs more to redeem the soul, and that must be let alone for ever," by all who neglect the precious ransom, which the Saviour once paid, when "he gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify us to himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Let us then learn to value our souls, and Christ as the Saviour of them; and to despise every glittering bait, and every formidable danger, by which Satan would allure or fright us from our only refuge. Let us fear coming short of this salvation, and

continually anticipate the season, when "the Son of Man" shall come in the glory of his Father, and all his holy angels with him, to reward every man according to his works: for he will mercifully recompense the fruits of his own grace in us, and all our losses and sufferings for his sake: but "if any man draw back, his soul will have no pleasure in him." Though our trials must come first, yet they will soon be over: we shall speedily behold our once suffering Saviour in his glory, and our taste of death will introduce us into "his presence, where is fullness of joy and pleasures at his right hand for evermore."

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII. V. 1, 2. (*Marg. Ref.*) The evangelists Matthew and Mark place this event six days after the discourse of the preceding chapter, as six whole days intervened: but St. Luke, taking in both the day of the discourse and that of the transfiguration, says that it was eight days after. Our Lord retired to a mountain apart to pray, where he spent the night, as we find he did several times: tradition reports that it was mount Tabor, to the north of Galilee. He was pleased to take with him Peter, James, and John, but not the other apostles; because it "seemed good in his sight," for we cannot assign any other satisfactory reason. The same apostles had witnessed the resurrection of Jairus' daughter, and they afterwards attended him in his agony in the garden. (xxvi. 37. Mark v. 33.) They were a competent number to prove the fact, and more were unnecessary. Whilst he was engaged in prayer, he was *transfigured*, or *metamorphosed* before them. The original word is of the same meaning with that used by the apostle, for "the form of God," and "the form of a servant." (Phil. ii. 6-8.) The apostles saw their Master daily in "the form of a servant," and as the Son of Man: but on this occasion they "beheld his glory as the Only begotten of the Father," and had such a discovery of him "in the form of God," as they were able to sustain. His disguise was, as it were, laid aside, and he appeared like himself: the Sun of Righteousness, the Light of the world, shone forth from behind those clouds that commonly obscured his splendour. The fashion of his countenance was altered, and did shine like the sun: and his very raiment became white as snow, so as no fuller on earth could whiten it; yea, white as the light, and resplendent as lightning! This appearance of Christ as Man would give the apostles some apprehension of the divine glory, which he had with the Father before his incarnation, and which was always inherent in him, though he saw good to veil it under external meanness.— It would serve to interpret to them the meaning of their own confession, "thou art the Son of the living God:" it was intended to support their faith at that approaching season, when they would witness his crucifixion: and it would give them an idea of his heavenly glory after his ascension; and of the glory prepared for them also, when changed by his power to be like him, even in respect of his glorified body. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 3. In addition to the personal glory which our Lord at this time manifested, there appeared Moses and Elijah conversing with him, on the subject of the painful and ignominious death which he was shortly to suffer at Jerusalem. The apostles, hearing at least part of this conversation, probably understood, *from it*, that the persons whom they saw were Moses and Elijah. Elijah was taken up alive into heaven, and, doubtless, appeared in his glorified body; but whether the body of Moses was raised for this purpose, or how he came, are no proper subjects of inquiry. This was suited to give the apostles a realizing apprehension of the invisible world, and of the present felicity of departed believers, to which they would immediately be admitted, if faithful to death. These two eminent persons attended on Jesus as servants on their Lord, coming, as it were, on purpose to do him homage; glorious indeed, but with glory far beneath His, as the planets are less resplendent than the noon-day sun, from whom they derive their lustre, and by whose beams they are eclipsed. Moses was the great lawgiver of Israel, and Elijah the chief of the prophets: but they both came, as it were, to lay down their commissions and their honours at the Redeemer's feet; in whose person, and obedience unto death, the moral law was magnified, the ceremonial types were fulfilled, the prophecies were accomplished, and the end of all preceding dispensations answered. Thus Moses and Elijah bare witness to the apostles, that Jesus was their Lord also; and that, by his coming, the time of the law and the prophets was terminated, and that of the Gospel introduced.

V. 4. With this glorious scene before their eyes, the apostles were heavy with sleep, either overpowered by its splendour, or drowsy through weariness; but when they were awakened, Peter, delighted and surprised to see his beloved Master appear in glory, and receive such honour, instead of hearkening to the discourse, broke out into an exclamation, that 'it was most pleasant and desirable for them to continue there,' and not to go down any more to meet those sufferings, of which he was so reluctant to hear. He, therefore, proposed to erect on the mountain three temporary huts, or tents, for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah; but in this he knew not what he said. That sacrifice was not yet offered, without which his sinful soul

they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, 'Arise, and be not afraid.'

8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, 'Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.'

10 And his disciples asked him, saying, 'Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?'

11 And Jesus answered and said unto

could not have been saved: and most important services were appointed to him, and his brethren, for the glory of God, and the good of the Church, in all succeeding ages. Peter, on this occasion, also savoured the things of men, and was not ready for the spiritual felicity to which he aspired; and he seems to have forgotten the disciples that were left below, from a regard to his own present ease and comfort. He, however, scarcely understood the meaning of his own proposal, which was rather the language of his feelings than of his understanding.

V. 5-8. Whilst Peter was speaking, "a bright cloud overshadowed them;" an emblem of the divine presence and glory, but so veiled as to suit their mortal state: yet it was not like the tremendous display from mount Sinai at the giving of the law, nor of the thick darkness by which the Lord took possession of the temple; but a bright cloud, denoting the introduction of a clearer and more encouraging discovery of the divine glory by the Gospel. (*Marg. Ref.*) From this cloud a voice was distinctly heard, which coincided with the testimony borne to Christ at his baptism; the eternal Father declaring "Him to be his well beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased;" to which was added a command to them to "hear him," in preference even to Moses and the prophets, whose external appointments he would supersede, or alter. This glorious vision astonished and terrified the apostles; and they fell prostrate in adoration and dismay, and lay till Jesus came to encourage them: when, arising and looking around, they found that the vision was departed, and their Lord left alone with them, in his usual appearance; save that it is probable some lustre still continued in his countenance, even after they went down from the mount. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 9. As Jesus came down the next day to the other apostles and the people, he charged those with him not to mention the instructive and animating scene which they had witnessed, till after his resurrection from the dead: for, before that event, it would not have obtained credit; and it was for the present, rather intended for their own support and encouragement, than for the conviction of others. It seems that the other disciples were included in this general charge. The word *vision* means 'the things which had been seen.'

them, Elias shall truly first come, ^a and restore all things :

12 But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, ^b and they knew him not, ^c but have done unto him whatsoever they listed : ^d likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

13 Then ^e the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

14 ¶ And ^f when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, ^g kneeling down to him, and saying,

15 Lord, ^h have mercy on my son ; ⁱ for he is lunatic, and sore vexed : ^k for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

16 And I brought him to thy disciples, ^l and they could not cure him.

^a 16, 17. ^b 18. ^c 19. ^d 20. ^e 21. ^f 22. ^g 23. ^h 24. ⁱ 25. ^j 26. ^k 27. ^l 28.

17 Then Jesus answered and said, ^m O faithless and perverse generation, ⁿ how long shall I be with you ? How long shall I suffer you ? Bring him hither to me.

18 And Jesus ^o rebuked the devil, and he departed out of him : and the child was cured ^p from that very hour.

19 Then ^q came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out ?

20 And Jesus said unto them, ^r Because of your unbelief : for verily I say unto you, ^s If ye have faith as ^t a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place ; and it shall remove ; and ^u nothing shall be impossible unto you.

V. 10—13. The apostles being fully convinced that Jesus was the promised Messiah, and that he would speedily set up his glorious kingdom, were yet unable to reconcile these things with the doctrine of the scribes, that Elias, or Elijah, "must first come;" especially as it was grounded on an express prophecy in Malachi. Perhaps they supposed that the appearance of Elijah on the mount was intended ; but in that case why must they conceal it ? To this our Lord replied, It had doubtless been predicted that Elijah would come, and restore or regulate all things, in order to prepare the way for the Messiah's kingdom ; but that in fact he had come, and the people and scribes had not known him, and at length he had been put to death by the malice of his enemies : and in like manner they would also persecute and slay their promised Messiah, as it had been predicted by the prophets. By this the disciples more clearly perceived that John Baptist had been foretold, under the name of Elijah, because of the similarity of his disposition and work. (Note, xi. 7—14.)—He shall

"finish, or perform, establish, settle, all things ; both perform all that was prophesied of Elias at his coming, and close and shut up the first state of the world, that of the Messianic economy, making entrance, as a harbinger, on the second, that of the Messiah. In this sense it is said, "the law and the prophets were until John," noting him to be the conclusion and shutting up, finishing and closing, of that state ; and that was to be the office of Elias, under whose name John was prefigured." (Harmond.)—The Scribes and Pharisees rejected John's baptism ;—they refused to believe his doctrine, or to own him as a prophet,—saying, that "he had a devil." And it is probable, that both they and the Sadducees did this, because he had styled them "a generation of vipers." And though we do not read that they gave occasion either to his imprisonment or his death, yet we may reasonably suppose that they, who thus thought and spake of him, were well pleased at it ;—it not being for fear of them, but of the multitude, who accounted him as a prophet, that Herod, for a season, was restrained from killing him." (Whitby.)

V. 14—18. (Notes, Mark ix. 14—29.)

Kneeling. (Marg. Ref.)—*Lunatic.* (15.) That is, one whose malady has paroxysms at certain seasons of the moon. This is the case in some kinds of madness, and in the epilepsy. No doubt this youth had an epilepsy, of which an evil spirit taking advantage, produced all those extraordinary and distressing effects, which are more fully recorded in the other Gospels.

Faithless, &c. The scribes and multitude were chiefly meant in this rebuke : yet the disciples, and even the father of the child, showed a very reprehensible degree of unbelief on this occasion. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 19, 20. The apostles had, doubtless, in some instances cast out devils ; but, being baffled at this time, they inquired the reason of their disappointment. To this he replied, that it was wholly owing to their unbelief. Perhaps they had been discouraged in the attempt by an apprehension of the difficulty of the case ; they had not, however, that simple and entire reliance on the power and promise of Christ, which was requisite. For if this had been the case, though their faith had been small, and apparently inadequate to the effect, like a grain of mustard-seed, they might, had it been necessary, have removed the mountain before them, as nothing could be impossible to that almighty Power, which faith engaged on their side. "Faith as a grain of mustard seed," some understand of a faith that growth and increaseth as a grain of mustard-seed. — Christ, elsewhere, for "the removing of a mountain," requires "faith in God," (Matt. xxi. 21.) which seems to signify an exceeding faith. "Faith without doubting." St. Paul reckons faith able "to remove mountains," as the strongest faith.—Did your faith increase, according to the examples of God's power you have had before your eyes, as the grain of mustard-seed grows up to be the greatest of all herbs, so would your faith transmount, and grow superior, to all difficulties.—A remover of mountains imports a doer of those things which are most difficult, and beyond the power of nature to perform. (Whitby.)—Both these expressions seem to have been taken from proverbs com-

21 Howbeit ^athis kind goeth not out
 but by prayer and fasting.
 22 And while they abode in Galilee,
 Jesus said unto them, ^aThe Son of man
 shall be ^abetrayed into the hands of
 men:

34 Luke ix 22.
44 xviii 31-34.
xxiv 6, 7, 26-46.
xxix 10 xxvi
16, 46 Acts vii.
52 : Cor xi 23

23 And ^b they shall kill him; and ^c the
third day he shall be raised again. ^d And
they were exceeding sorry.

24 ¶ And *when they were come to Capernaum, they that received *tribute-money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your Master pay tribute?

25 He saith, ' Yes. And when he was

come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? ^g of their own children, or ^g 1 Sam. xvii. 13 of strangers?

26 Peter saith unto him, Oĩ strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.

27 Notwithstanding, ^blest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, ⁱ and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find [†] a piece of moneý; that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

monly used at that time, and therefore more fully understood by our Lord's hearers, than they are by us.

V. 21. This seems clearly to intimate, that there are different orders of evil spirits, some more powerful and malignant than others: and that these could not be cast out, except by persons who gave themselves up to fasting and prayer. As success depended on the strength and simplicity of faith, fasting and prayer must be considered as proper means for increasing humility, zeal, compassion, and those holy affections of the soul, with which vigorous and simple faith must be intimately connected: and the spirit of the instruction is equally applicable to us, in our personal conflicts and public services. 'Because devotion is apt to grow dull and faint, there must be an exercise of fasting and abstinence, to put an edge upon it, and to stir it up.' (*Bp. Hall.*)

V. 22, 23. (Note, Mark ix. 30—32. Marg. Ref.)

V. 24—27. The tribute here mentioned seems to have been the half-shekel, a piece which was collected to defray the expense of the service of the sanctuary. This at first was collected occasionally, as wanted : but we are informed by Josephus, that in his time it was paid annually, by all above twenty years of age. Peter, when asked whether his Master did not pay this tribute, answered at once that he did ; knowing him to be ready for every act of piety and equity. But Jesus, preventing his mention of the subject, by showing that he knew what had passed, asked him, Of whom kings were accustomed to levy taxes ? Of their children, or of strangers ? *Children*, in this connexion, must be understood literally ; and *strangers* must mean the children of others : for kings generally collect taxes from their subjects, though they except their own families. By this question he intimated, that as the Son of God, the Lord of the temple, (and as such the Jews ought to have recognized and welcomed him,) he had no right to contribute to the expenses there incurred for the benefit of those who in themselves were strangers and enemies. ‘ Our Saviour’s argument, why he should not pay this tribute, as being the Son of that King to whom it was paid, holds not with reference to the other paid to Cæsar, he being not the Son of Cæsar, but of God.’ (*Whitby*.) Lest, however, any should take offence at his refusal, as if regardless of the temple-worship, he availed his privi-

lege: and as he had no money by him, he ordered Peter to cast a hook into the sea, which was close by; and assured him that in the mouth of the first fish that he caught he should find a piece of money, containing a shekel of silver, which would suffice for them both. * By which example Christ teacheth us to avoid the scandal and sinister suspicions of men, though they be groundless, with some detriment to ourselves, especially when we have not means to convince them. The scandal of the Pharisees, proceeding not from ignorance, but pure malice, he is not thus concerned to avoid.' (*Whitby.*) (*Marg. Refs.*) The external poverty of Christ contrasted with this display of divine glory, must sensibly affect every considerate mind. By whatever means this piece of money was lodged in the mouth of the fish, omniscience alone could discover it there, and omnipotence ensure its being first brought to Peter's hook. Had Jesus so pleased, all the treasures in the depths of the sea and in the heart of the earth, might with equal ease have been laid at his feet. His poverty was therefore voluntary, as our suffering Surety, to take away the reproach of that condition, and to reconcile his people to it, as best and safest for them. The other disciples, it is probable, paid the tribute, either in the several cities where they had lived, or at some other time.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Y. 1—13.

Discoveries of the Redeemer's majesty greatly assist us in rightly understanding the motive, the benefit, and the glory of his abasement. Could we now behold that sacred countenance, which once, for our sins, was disfigured with blood and spitting, we should view it more resplendent than the meridian sun. We should no longer see the Saviour crowned with thorns, insulted with the purple robe, and nailed to the cross between two thieves; but "arrayed with light as a garment," and surrounded with the adoring throng of prophets, apostles, saints, and angels, vying with each other, who should most rapturously celebrate his praises: yea, we should hear the eternal Father, from the inaccessible light in which he dwells

CHAP. XVIII.

Jesus teaches humility by the emblem of a little child, 1—4. He inculcates attention to his little ones, and watchfulness against stumbling others, or falling ourselves, 5—10. He illustrates his care of his people by the parable of a lost sheep, 10—14; shows how to act towards an offending brother, 15—17; gives special promises to those who unite in prayer, or meet in his name, 18—20;

and enforces the constant forgiveness of injuries, by a parable of a king and his dealings with a servant, who was deeply indebted to him; yet was not influenced by his readiness to forgive him, to forgive his fellow servant, 21—35.

a Mark ix. 35.
b xx. 20—22. xxi.
11. Mark ix. 31.
x. 33—34. Luke
ix. 46—48. xxi.
24—27. Rom.
xii. 10. Phil. ii.
3.
c. ii. 2. v. 19, 20.
vi. 21. Mark x.
ix. 16.
d. xix. 13. 14. 1.
e. xix. 1. 7. Jer.
7. Mark ix.
36, 37.

AT^a the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?'

2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

V. 14—27.

invisible, proclaim the honours of the Redeemer as his co-equal Son, and regard himself as glorified in all the adorations rendered to him. But how dull and drowsy are our minds, when we would contemplate such subjects! If, however, by faith we get a glimpse of our Redeemer's glory, and our hearts glow with love and joy, we find our heaven begun, and are ready to say, "It is good for us to be here;" and we want always to continue in that pleasant frame of spirit, and to spend our lives in contemplation. But we know not what we say or do: there is in this a large proportion of carnal self-love; some knowledge indeed of the essence of felicity; but great ignorance of what is needful to fit us for it, and of the situation in which we are placed during our continuance here. These glimpses and foretastes are vouchsafed, to prepare us for tribulations, and support us under them; but we must pass through varying experiences in our way to glory, and spend our lives in self-denying services, for the honour of Christ and the benefit of his people. We know not what we shall at last be; yet we are assured, that when the Saviour shall appear we shall be like him; and as our bodies must be changed by his omnipotence, so must our souls be transfigured and transformed by his renewing grace. This should be our grand *personal* object, whilst we wait for the time, when he "will receive us to himself, that where he is, there we may be also." In order to this we must obediently hear him, as our Prophet and King; trust in him as the great Mediator, in whom the Father is well pleased; and wait for the communication of his grace, in fervent prayer, and retirement from the hurry of this vain world. But we could not now endure the refulgency of the divine glory: not only the terrors of mount Sinai, but the glories of mount Tabor, would overwhelm us, save for the gracious interposition and encouraging words of the incarnate Saviour. After sweet seasons of communion with God, we must return to our several employments: yet the Saviour will be with us, if we rely on his promises, and are observant of his precepts; and we should ever keep in mind his death and resurrection, and anticipate the time, when we shall behold him in glory and be for ever with him. But even with the Scriptures in our hands, how apt are we to overlook the accomplishment of them! And how little in comparison has yet been effected, in bringing fallen sinners unto God, by the labours of all his servants! Men knew not the Son of the Father, but crucified and slew him; and we should not wonder, if they treat his disciples and ministers in the same manner.

Manifold are the troubles of body and mind, personal and domestic, to which we are liable, by the power of Satan, and for our sins: but through the goodness of our God, hitherto we have not been destroyed, though sorely vexed and endangered; and if our troubles bring us humbly to seek help from Christ, they will eventually do us good. We may do right in applying to disciples, and they may be desirous to help us, though often unable: nothing, however, but our personal unbelief and disobedience can preclude us from finding relief in Christ; though he will rebuke us, if we remain faithless and perverse amidst opportunities of instruction and conviction. Should we inquire the reason of our ill success in our conflicts with sin and temptation and our endeavours to do good, the answer would still be, "because of your unbelief." Wonderful is the power of holy faith; and nothing is impossible to those who go forth in the Redeemer's name, to obey his commands and promote his cause. But our faith will commonly be strong, and our efforts successful, in proportion as we seek the victory by fasting and prayer: and it especially behooves us to make a fair trial of this method, as to those particular conflicts in which we have been most foiled. What a varied scene of outward debasement, and of divine glory, was the life of our Redeemer! Yet all his humiliation made way for his resurrection and final exaltation. Let us then endure the cross, despise riches and worldly honours, and be contented in poverty, if that be his will concerning us. Let those who are rich learn to be poor in spirit, and not to trust in riches, or to despise the needy, lest they be found to have reproached their Saviour as well as their Maker. We should always be ready to waive our privileges and exemptions, rather than give offence. Yet we seldom follow the dictates of our own minds without inquiring the will of God, but we fall into some mistakes, even in things apparently most obvious. Even the poor believer should be ready to pay tribute and custom, for the credit of the Gospel, and trust in the Lord to defray the expense: and the fishers of men, though needy, may go on cheerfully in their work, trusting in the Lord to supply their wants: for he will, when necessary, bring to their net such as shall be both able and willing to contribute to the support of his cause. But how glorious are the privileges, and how noble the freedom, of the children of the King of kings! To these privileges we strangers are admitted by faith in Christ; and "if the Son make us free, then shall we be free indeed."

3 And said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me.

6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

1. x. 40-42. xxv. 40, 42. Mark ix. 41. Luke ix. 48.

6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

1. x. 32, 33. 2 The. i. 6-9. — Zech. xiii. 7.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII. V. 1-4 (*Marg. Ref.*) It appears from the other evangelists, that our Lord first inquired of the disciples, what they had disputed about by the way? and for some time they remained silent, being afraid to mention the subject: but at length, sensible that he knew their thoughts, they plainly asked him, which of them was to be the greatest in that kingdom he was about to establish? No doubt they had respect to a supposed secular kingdom, and its dignities and preferments, to the chief of which each of them aspired, resting his claim on different grounds: so that the dispute originated from error, ambition, and emulation, and had no reference to growth in grace, and real eminence in the spiritual kingdom on earth, or to a proportionate degree of glory in heaven. Had our Lord intended any pre-eminence in authority to Peter or any of his successors, he would doubtless at this time have given some intimation of it; but on the contrary he treated all such pretensions with the most decided disapprobation. Having therefore called a little child to him, he set him before them, solemnly assuring them, that without they were converted, and rendered like little children, they could not at all enter his kingdom: and that he, who should humble himself like the little child, would eventually be found the most excellent and honourable person. Children, when very young, show little disposition to claim precedence, or to aspire after authority: they willingly associate with their inferiors, are regardless of external distinctions, and devoid of malice and guile: they are docile, simple, submissive to authority: they willingly dependent on their parents, and disposed to credit what they say. No doubt they soon begin to show other propensities, and other ideas are early inculcated into many of them; but these are the obvious characteristics of childhood, and suffice to render them proper emblems of the humble, unambitious, submissive, and dependent spirit, which is the essence and the excellency of genuine Christianity. Though not *innocent*, they are comparatively *harmless*: as the young, even of the most ferocious animals, are at first innoxious, but soon begin to discover the nature of that stock from which they sprang. In general therefore little children are apt emblems of those qualities which are the effects of regeneration: and though all the apostles, except Judas, were at this time regenerate and converted, in the strict sense of the words, yet they needed a very great change, in respect of their ambition and carnal emulation; and it was proper to show them, that in their present temper they were not only unfit to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, but even unmeet for the meanest station in it: and that the lust of domineering was as contrary to Christianity, as any kind of immorality.

He requires them, to fit them for this kingdom, to become like little children, who are absolutely free from all contrivances and designs of this nature, never concerned in the least for empire and dominion over others, or for increase of wealth, or great possessions, and know not what a post of honour, or what wealth, means. This, saith our Lord, will remove all that obstructs your entrance into my kingdom, and make you the most eminent subjects of it. (*Whitby.*)—As this is the spirit of the kingdom, they who are most lowly and indifferent about consequence and pre-eminence, and most willing to be little, inferior, and neglected, must be the greatest; and not they who have the greatest abilities, most splendid gifts, or most exalted stations in the Church.

V. 5, 6. "The little ones," includes the meanest of those who come to Christ, and, as far as man can discern, believe in him and belong to him: especially such as, being peculiarly humble and poor in spirit, are the greatest in his sight, but often most slighted by men, whether as ministers or private Christians. (*Marg. Ref.*) These are the most proper and evident representatives of the meek and lowly Saviour; and whoever should receive, (that is, embrace in love, entertain or be kind to, or hearken to instruction from any one of them,) would, in the person of a mean and obscure person, receive Christ himself, and be accepted and recompensed accordingly. But he, who should wilfully injure, deceive, or ensnare him, would be guilty of so great a crime, and, unless he repented, be exposed to so terrible a punishment, that it would have been better for him to have had a large millstone tied round his neck, and to have been cast into the sea, as was the custom sometimes in executing notorious criminals: and indeed every one ought to dread stumbling or grieving humble disciples, worse than the most terrible death. The word rendered *offend*, signifies *cause to fall*. It is used for those that fall and perish; and for those that fall and rise again. All the disciples were *offended*, when Christ was betrayed to his enemies; and Peter especially: but, saith the Saviour, "I have prayed for thee, that thy *faith fail not*." (*Notes*, xxvi. 30-35. *Luke* xxii. 31-34.) The conduct however of those who contemptuously, maliciously, or even heedlessly, did such things as tended to the destruction of their weak brethren, would not be in the least excused, because the special grace of God prevented the fatal consequences. The men of Lystra, who stoned Paul and left him for dead, were his murderers in the sight of God, though he was pleased to restore his apostle to life and health. All attempts therefore to prove or disprove disputed points of doctrine from such passages, are foreign to the purpose of the sacred historians.

e xxi. 29 xxii. 42

1 Cor. x. 15.

1 Pet. i. 11.

Jer. i. 6.

xxiv. 16.

Luk. xv. 4.

1 Pet. ii. 25.

1 Kin. xxi. 17.

1 Pet. i. 11.

1 Ps. cxviii. 11.

1 Ps. cxviii. 11.

5 Jer. xxxii. 37.

1 Jer. vi. 10.

12 Zeph. iii. 17.

Luk. x. 9-10.

20. 21. John. iv.

21-26. Jam. ii.

13.

Luk. xii. 32.

John. vi. 39. 40.

x. 27-30. xvii.

12. Rom. viii. 26.

-38. Eph. i. 5.

7. 1 Pet. i. 3-5.

v. 16. vi. 9. 32.

11. 12. Heb. xii. 13.

-25. Lev. vi. 2-7.

Luk. xvii. 2. 4.

1 Cor. v. 6-9. vii. 12.

Col. iii. 13. 1 Thes. iv. 6.

12 "How think ye? 'If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?"

13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

14 Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

15 Moreover, if thy brother shall be lost, that may be by any cares or methods of ours he recovered to piety. (Hammond.) No doubt, our Lord especially meant to teach his disciples their duty in this respect. "The weaker a man is, the greater care we ought to have of his salvation, as God teacheth us by his own example." (Beza.)

V. 12, 13. In illustrating this subject, our Lord added a parable, with an appeal to the understandings and hearts of his hearers. If a man had a hundred sheep in his pasture, and one of them should be lost, would not this stray sheep more occupy his attention, than all the rest? Would he not go to the mountains to seek it, until he found it? And would he not in that case express more joy on account of it, than for all those that had never gone astray? This shows the exposed helpless condition of perishing sinners; who, having wandered from God, are liable to be destroyed by Satan, and to fall into hell; even as sheep, when wandered from the fold, are exposed to devouring beasts, or to fall into the pit and perish. It moreover shows that the good Shepherd knows his flock, even before they are brought into his fold; that he seeks them before they seek him; and that he rejoices in saving them from all enemies and dangers. It therefore behooves his ministers, and all his disciples, to concur in this design, to rejoice at the appearance of a sinner's conversion, to encourage and help the weak, and not to despise, grieve, or stumble them.

V. 14. In calling the attention of the disciples to this important subject, Jesus added, "Even so it is not the will," &c. (Notes, John vi. 36-40.) "that one of these little ones should perish." They ought therefore to copy the example of angels, of the Son of God, and of the Father himself, respecting them; and not that of proud Pharisees. (Notes, Luke xv. 1-10.) "God is very unwilling that any, the meanest person upon earth, should

trespass against thee." go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

18 Verily I say unto you, whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.

19 And if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

20 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

V. 15-17. Contentions amongst Christians tend exceedingly to set the world against the Gospel; and as they must arise, in this present state, among persons who are sanctified only in part, and who are liable both to give cause for anger, and to be angry without cause themselves; so our Lord next prescribed some rules for stopping the progress, and preventing the consequences of them, which could seldom fail of being effectual, if honestly followed. In case a man should be injured by a brother, a professed Christian, he ought not to go and complain of it to others, (as is commonly done perhaps upon rumour,) to inflame his own resentment, and wound his neighbour's reputation; but he ought to go privately, and in a gentle, yet plain and convincing manner, to state the matter, and show him the injustice and unreasonableness of his conduct. If this produces a proper effect, (as it generally will with a true Christian,) and he sees and acknowledges his fault; then the offending brother is won over; and, instead of an open breach, a cordial reconciliation takes place, and love is continued and increased. But if this private application fails of success, and the offender persists in his injury, and refuses reasonable terms of agreement, the offended party is next ordered to take with him one or two other Christian friends, who may hear and bear witness to the facts that are alleged, and the terms of accommodation which are proposed; that they may be reported to the Church on more unexceptionable testimony; and if these witnesses determine the person to be faulty, and approve of the concessions required, and he refuses to hearken to them, and persists in his injury; it will then be necessary to declare the matter more openly, not to the world, but to the Church, (i. e. the teachers and professors of the Gospel,) that the injurious party may be solemnly censured and reproved by them. And if he still refuses to submit, he ought thenceforth to be considered as a heathen or publican; and should be shunned by all pious Christians, that he may be ashamed, and excluded from their communion till he gives tokens of repentance. It would be absurd to restrict these rules to

n xvi. 19. John
5:8-24 Act. xv.
28, 29. 1 Cor. v.
4, 5. Rev. vii. 3.

18 Verily I say unto you, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."

x xvi. 22. Mark
x. 13, 24. John xvi.
7, 16. Act. i. 14.
11. 1, 2. 1 Cor. v.
20, 21. 1 Tim. v.
5. Eph. vi. 10, 12.
Phil. i. 19. Jam.
v. 14-16. 1 John
v. 14-16. Rev.
x. 1-6.
v. John xiv. 13.
14. xvi. 29, 34.

19 Again I say unto you, "That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

20 For where "two or three are gathered together in my name," there am I in the midst of them.

21 "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?" "till seven times?"

22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; "but, Until seventy times seven."

7 Gen. xlv. 10.
John x. 19, 20.
1 Cor. v. 11. Phil. 2.
8 xxiii. 20. 17.
xx. 21. Zech. 11.
9 John xiii. 36.
10 1 Tim. i. 11-12.
11 1 Tim. i. 11-12.

b 15. Luke xviii.
3, 4.
c vi. 11, 12, 11.
d vi. 14, 17.
e Marg. Mic. vi.
12 Mark xi. 25.
26 Rom. xii.
Eph. iv. 26, 31.
22 v. 1 Col. iii.
13 1 Tim. i. 11.

any particular form of Church Government and discipline: yet they certainly suppose the existence of government and discipline among Christians, and the exclusion of disorderly persons from those societies to which they immediately belong: and they are capable of being reduced to practice under different forms of Church-government, though they are in a great measure neglected by all. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 18. In confirmation of this procedure, our Lord added a solemn assurance, that such decisions would be ratified in heaven; whether they expelled the unruly from communion, or received the penitent by reversing the sentence. This supposes, that the persons concerned decided according to truth and equity; for a groundless sentence of excommunication, or absolution, cannot possibly make any alteration in a man's state or character; all such decisions being merely *declaratory*. This has been entirely overlooked, in all those scandalous abuses of church censures, which are the real cause of that relaxation, or destitution, of discipline, which now so generally prevails. (*Note, xvi. 19.*) Our Lord spoke to the apostles, and to all of them. The absolute authority given them was inseparably connected with their immediate inspiration; and all their successors, pretended or real, from the conclave at Rome to an independent Church-meeting, are concerned in the promise, just so far as their decisions, whether they bind or loose, accord to the doctrines, precepts, and rules, transmitted to us from the apostles, and no further.—"Nor shall you only in these cases have power, as Christians, to loose your repenting, and bind your obstinately offending, brethren: but as you are my apostles, to whom I have promised my Spirit, "to teach you all things, and lead you unto all truth," whatsoever things ye shall bind on earth, or shall declare to be forbidden on pain of my displeasure, shall render them indeed obnoxious to my wrath; and whatsoever things ye shall loose on earth, (though once acknowledged as of divine authority by those who owned the law of Moses,) shall be loosed in heaven; and men shall be allowed to do them, without incurring my displeasure."—And in this sense, this promise is the foundation of our obligation to believe and obey all the commands and doctrines of the apostles, and of the cessation of the ritual precepts of the law of Moses." (*Whitby.*) Authority, to this extent, men have claimed, but God never gave it to any, except his inspired apostles: and in this view, the promise is our Lord's full attestation to all the writings, which by them, and under their inspection, were given to the Church and to posterity, as the infallible oracles of God.

V. 19, 20. It is here supposed, that all such transactions, as those above-mentioned, would be conducted with prayer for direction, and for the humiliation of the offender: and in this case not only might an answer be expected when many should concur; but even when two persons should agree to present their joint request *on earth*, the eternal Father, whose throne is in heaven, would surely regard and answer it. Some interpret this of those miraculous interpositions, by which the censures of the Church were sometimes followed and confirmed in the primitive times; or restrict it to the apostles, in the execution of their important office: and as they were immediately addressed, this might be especially intended, (*Marg. Ref.*) yet it seems to be also a general promise encouraging social prayer, especially in arduous cases. When such prayers are presented in faith, and the petition of them is conducive to our good and to the glory of God, we are every where warranted to expect an answer: and these limitations must have been implied, even in the days when miracles were wrought. To this Christ added, that when two or three were assembled in his name; that is, in dependence on his promise, in obedience to his command, out of love to him and regard to his glory, for prayer, or other acts of worship, to hear his word, or to regulate such things as pertain to the peace and purity of his Church; "there," says He, "I AM in the midst of you." He says not *I will be*, but *I am*, referring to his divine presence at all times and in all places; and to his special presence, by the influences of his Spirit to communicate blessings to his people, whenever, or wherever, they wait upon him for them. Two or three of his people may be thus met together, in thousands of places all over the earth, at the same time: this must therefore be allowed to be a direct assertion of his omnipresent Deity; and cannot on any other supposition be rendered consistent with propriety. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 21, 22. As our Lord had intimated that his disciples must bestow pains to obtain peace with their offending brethren, Peter wanted to be informed, how often they were to renew their forgiveness of injuries to such as repeated the offence. And, perhaps with reference to the traditions of the elders, he asked whether they were to proceed as far as seven times? To this our Lord answered, that they ought to forgive, not only to the seventh time, but to seventy times seven; meaning an indefinite number, even as often as men renew their offences, or as God renews his pardons to believers. (*Note, Luke xviii. 3, 4.*)—The determination of the Rabbins runs thus, that "three offences are to be remitted, but not the fourth."

o Lu. 2. xiii. 24
21. 30. 41. 45. 47.
o xxv. 1-14
e xxv. 1-14
xiii. 12-27
Rom. xiv. 12. 1
Cor. iv. 5. 2 Cor.

23 Therefore ^d is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, ^e which would take account of his servants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which ^f owed him ^g ten thousand * talents :

25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord ^h commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down, and ⁱ worshipped him, saying, Lord, ^j have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which

owed him an hundred ^k pence; and he laid hands on him, ^l and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

29 And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, ^m Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30 And he would not; ⁿ but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

31 So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, ^o they were very sorry, ^p and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, ^q O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me :

33 Shouldest not thou also have had

o Lu. 2. xiii. 24
21. 30. 41. 45. 47.
o xxv. 1-14
e xxv. 1-14
xiii. 12-27
Rom. xiv. 12. 1
Cor. iv. 5. 2 Cor.
o Lu. 2. xiii. 24
21. 30. 41. 45. 47.
o xxv. 1-14
e xxv. 1-14
xiii. 12-27
Rom. xiv. 12. 1
Cor. iv. 5. 2 Cor.
o Lu. 2. xiii. 24
21. 30. 41. 45. 47.
o xxv. 1-14
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xiii. 12-27
Rom. xiv. 12. 1
Cor. iv. 5. 2 Cor.
o Lu. 2. xiii. 24
21. 30. 41. 45. 47.
o xxv. 1-14
e xxv. 1-14
xiii. 12-27
Rom. xiv. 12. 1
Cor. iv. 5. 2 Cor.

1 The Roman praetor
took account of the
part of his power,
which after five
skilling, the
once is seven
pence half-pen-
ny xx. 2
1 Den. is 2 s. 6 d.
Mark 10. 11. 2
31. Is levi 3
Ez. xiv. 9
m 26. c. 12
Philom. iii. 19
o 1 Kings xxi. 27
-29 xxi. 27.

o Pa. cxix. 136.
158. per ix. 1
Mark 10. 5 Luke
xix. 41 Rom.
ix. 1-3. xii. 15.
x. Cor. xii. 29.
Heb. xiii. 3
p oen xxxvii. 2
Luke xiv. 21.
Heb. xiii. 17.
q xxv. 26 Luke
xii. 22 Rom.
iii. 19.

and these they gather from those words, "For three transgressions, and for four, I will not turn away my wrath." (Am. i. 3.) 'St. Peter puts the three and the four together, as perhaps others of their doctors did; and asks, whether he must forgive till seven times.' (Whitby.)

V. 23-27. To illustrate the subject Jesus used a parable. The kingdom of heaven, or God's method of dealing with men under the Christian dispensation, might be compared to that of a king, who required his servants to pass their accounts of the sums which they had received, and the way in which they had employed them. This represents God himself, as calling men to account for the use which they had made of their abilities and advantages, especially as this distinguishes the true Christian from the hypocrite. This king soon met with one, who, having been high in office and very unfaithful, owed him ten thousand talents, which by the lowest computation amounts to nearly two millions sterling. This represents our vast obligations to God, and our exceeding guilt as transgressors of his law, which is also increased by the neglect or abuse of his Gospel; and all are deeply indebted, but some more than others; (Note, Luke vii. 40-43.) As the servant was unable to pay this immense sum, his lord commanded, that he, and his wife and children, should be sold for slaves, and his substance confiscated, according to the custom of those countries, in order that payment might be made: this represents the strictness of the law and justice of God, and the dreadful punishment to which sinners are righteously exposed, from which they cannot deliver themselves, and in which they often involve their connexions. The servant, terrified by this sentence, in the most submissive posture craved time and patience, and promised that he would at length discharge the whole debt: this may show the terrors and convictions to which men are subject, from a view of the severity of God's justice, and that general hope of mercy by which they seek relief; but the engagement of paying the whole seems an intended intimation of an unhumiliated and self-confi-

dent spirit. The Lord, however, of that servant, is induced by compassion to set him at liberty and to remit the debt; knowing well that he would never be able to pay it; this represents the Lord's readiness to forgive all true penitents, and the false conclusions which many thence draw concerning their sins being pardoned.

V. 28-30. This person who had experienced such lenity went out, and met with a fellow servant, who owed him a trifling debt of a hundred denarii, or a little more than three pounds sterling; and, laying hold of him by the throat, (in a fierce and insolent manner, as if he meant to strangle him, as the original signifies,) insisted upon immediate payment: and even when the other used the very same words to him, as he had done to his lord; (and he might in time have paid his small debt, though the other could not his immense sum;) he would not wait, but cast him into prison till he should pay the debt. This shows the selfishness, severity, and unrelenting spirit of many professed Christians; and their pertinacious resentments, the result of pride, hardness of heart, and malevolence: for their views of the Gospel and their forced confessions seem to exasperate them, instead of softening and meliorating their tempers. Such men deal with their neighbours in so severe a manner, that if God mete to them by the same measure, as no doubt he will, judgment without mercy must be their portion. 'This seemeth to bear hard on those unmerciful creditors, who cast poor men, who they know have nothing to pay, into prison for their debt; so rendering their brother's state more miserable, and their debt from him as desperate as ever. For sùre, he that bids us "lend, hoping for nothing again," will not allow us to imprison, where nothing can be hoped for: and it is to be feared, that men so unmerciful will find little mercy at that day. For if it be a crime that will then be objected, to our condemnation, that we did not visit Christians when in prison; what will it be to cast them into prison?' (Whitby.) The ten thousand talents are six hundred thousand times as much as the hundred pence.

v. 41, 45 Luke
 vi. 25, 26 Ep
 lv. 12, v. 1, 2
 Col. ii. 13
 v. 1, 24 Luke
 vi. 13, 39
 Thes. i. 6, 9
 Rev. xiv. 10,
 11.

compassion on thy fellow-servant, 'even as I had pity on thee?

34 And his lord was wroth, 'and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

V. 31--35. It is here represented, that when the fellow servants saw this transaction, they were grieved to see a man, who had so merciful a master, thus cruel to one that was in his power; and they came to inform their lord of all these things. This shows, that real Christians are grieved and shocked at the misconduct of professed believers, more than at the wickedness of those who pretend not to religion; and that they complain to God of the dishonour thus done to his Gospel. The Lord then called the servant, and having reproached him for acting in such direct opposition to his merciful example, and having shown the wickedness of his character and the unreasonableness of his conduct, he with deep indignation delivered him over to the executioners of justice, to be confined and punished by them till he had paid the whole debt; and as he was not able to pay it, he could never obtain deliverance. 'God's pardons in this life are not absolute, but, according to the petition of the Lord's prayer, answerable to our dealings with others, and so, conditional, and are no longer likely to be continued to us, than we perform the condition.' (Hammond.) Where then is the "blessedness of him, whose iniquities are forgiven?" "He that heareth my words, and believeth in him that sent me," saith our Lord, "hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." (John v. 24.) *Circumstances* in parables do not always admit of minute application. In the parable of the prodigal son, the elder brother, who was evidently the representative of the Pharisees, is spoken of as heir of all his father's property. Our Lord frequently addressed men according to what they thought of themselves, and not according to their real character. The servant, in this parable, bears no one mark of a humble penitent; and none but humble penitents are true believers, or really pardoned; though many others think themselves so. The general tenour of Scripture excludes the supposition, that God actually forgives men, and then afterwards imputes guilt to them to their final condemnation. But men will at last be dealt with, not according to their confidence, but according as their conduct towards their offending brethren has evidenced the reality of their faith and love, or the contrary. This is our Lord's own inference from it: whatever men's profession may be, God will deliver them as *wicked servants* to the tormentors, to be punished according to their sins with exact justice, if they do not from their hearts, which he especially regards, forgive their brethren their trespasses. No doubt, if true believers are betrayed into any degree of this unchristian spirit, they will experience frowns, rebukes, and chastenings: but to suppose that a real Christian can be of this revengeful temper, directly militates against the design of the parable, and of the whole Scripture; and is calculated to encourage selfish, malignant, and hard-hearted professors of evangelical doctrine, who are the scandal of the Gospel, and as unlike Christ, as the vilest libertine or drunkard in the world.

35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye 'from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

v. 12, 14, 15
 vii. 1, 2 Mark
 xx. 13 Luke
 vi. 37, 38
 vi. 13
 u Prov. xxi. 2
 Jer. ii. 10 Zech.
 xvi. 12 Luke
 xvi. 8 Rev. ii. 23

xvi. 15 Jam. iii. 14 iv. 8 Rev. ii. 23

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—6.

Pride and ambition are deeply rooted in our fallen nature; so that they remain, and often break forth, even in those who are born of God. Hence so many contentions in the Church, not only among mere nominal Christians, whose religion is only an occasion of aspiring to dominion; but even among real disciples, who are tempted to seek pre-eminence above their brethren, after they have given up their prospects of worldly honour and greatness! Such ambitious projects, however, are peculiarly contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, and to the character of Christ: and productive of envy, discord, and other fatal consequences. In this, as well as other respects, we need to be daily "renewed in the spirit of our mind," that we may become as little children, simple, humble, and willing to be the least of all and the servants of all. Without some measure of this disposition, we are mistaken, if we think ourselves the subjects of Christ; and he that hath made the greatest proficiency in self-abasement, is in fact the greatest in the kingdom of grace, and will shine the brightest in the kingdom of glory. We ought therefore daily to study this subject, and to examine our own spirits respecting it; that we may be more and more cast into the mould of the Gospel; that we may learn to behave properly towards our fellow Christians, esteeming and honouring those whom the Lord honours, and being afraid of injuring or grieving any of his little ones.

V. 7—14.

Alas, what miseries come upon the world, through the scandals that prevail in the Church! This warning should indeed render men very careful not to admit prejudices against Christianity, or any peculiar doctrines, from the misconduct of those who profess them: but to examine what Christianity is, in its nature and tendency, as it stands in the Scripture. Yet, alas, few will adopt this method! while therefore we mourn over the evils which we cannot remedy; we should be careful not to add to them, and should fear death less than dishonouring the Gospel, and causing souls to stumble and perish by our misconduct. We ought constantly to associate the idea of the Redeemer's glory with that of our own salvation; and to mortify every inclination, and renounce every interest, which may throw a stumbling-block in the way of others, even as if it endangered the loss of our own souls. This disposition is a proper evidence that we are true believers: but how dreadful will be the disappointment of selfish or self-indulgent persons, who, taking it for granted that they are safe, and not caring about the souls of their neighbours, prove the occasions of their ruin: and will at last sink themselves into the unquenchable and everlasting fire of hell, under the guilt of those sins, and the power of those

CHAP. XIX.

Jesus journeys towards Judea, and heals the sick, 1, 2; answers the Pharisees concerning divorces, and his disciples on the expediency of marriage, 3—12; receives little children, 13—15; discourses

with a rich young man concerning eternal life, and detects his love of wealth more than God, 16—22; shows the difficulty of a rich man's salvation, 23—26; and makes gracious promises to those who renounce worldly objects for his sake, 27—30.

darling lusts, which they refused here to relinquish and mortify! We should keep at a distance from this and every extreme, and labour to remove those offences which prejudice men against the Gospel: remembering that those persons are peculiarly entitled to our prayers, and to every countenance that we can give them, who attempt by any proper means to terminate the cruel oppressions which are the reproach of the Christian name; or to reform abuses and heal divisions within the Church. Numbers, who have been in some degree awakened to a concern about their souls, stumble and perish by the misconduct of professed disciples; and weak Christians are greatly harassed and perplexed by them. We ought therefore seriously to consider what effects our conduct may have upon such persons; and by no means to despise the scruples and mistakes of our weak brethren, or endanger their comfort and progress, from selfish motives. Ministers especially are called upon to watch over, and be gentle towards, the weak, feeble, and discouraged, and the young unestablished convert. And shall any of us refuse attention to those, whom the blessed angels delight to minister unto, whom the Son of God came to seek, and save, and concerning whom it is the Father's good pleasure, that not one of them should perish? This would be the more inexcusable in us; seeing we all have been as lost sheep, and have been ransomed by the blood, and brought back by the tender care, of our good Shepherd, who delights more in saving lost sinners, than even in the worship of those holy angels that never went astray; and who receives, as it were, a new accession of joy and glory, by every one that is brought back to his fold. Let us then remember from what a dreadful state we have been saved, and copy the pattern of our gracious Benefactor; and let us study to be gentle, harmless, and useful, as bechooves the sheep of his pasture.

V. 15—22.

How careful should all Christians be, to preserve the peace, as well as the purity, of the Church! Alas, many deem themselves injured, when in reality they have no cause to complain: and others have recourse to slander and litigation, and almost every other expedient, instead of trying the method which Christ hath expressly enjoined to all his disciples; and few, in any place, have uniformly followed these directions of our common Lord. Various corrupt maxims, customs, and reserves, prevent even conscientious men from speaking privately to their offending brethren, and from referring their disputes to the arbitration of pious Christians; hence jealousies, resentments, contentions, and even frivolous lawsuits, among professors of the Gospel; and hence mutual criminations, and appeals *in print to the world*, against each other, to the scandal of religion, and the insulting triumphs of its enemies!

Surely we ought not to harbour so injurious an opinion of a professed Christian, as to think, that he would not endure to be mildly expostulated with, when he had evidently done wrong! Surely we should prefer gaining, recovering, and conciliating our offending brother, to obtaining a victory over him, or exposing his character! And certainly he who hath done injustice, and will not be induced to make moderate concessions and amends, by private expostulations, or by the united judgment of Christians and ministers, has no longer a right to be treated as a believer, till he "repent, and do works meet for repentance." Harsher means should never be adopted, till milder have been tried without success; no man should think himself a competent judge in his own cause; nor should any Christian seek *legal* redress, till it is evident that no other means can procure that justice, which it is requisite should be done him. Indeed, the abuse of discipline, through the pride and corrupt passions of men, has so prejudiced the minds of numbers against it, that it is grievously fallen into disuse: yet in whatever way the faithful ministers of Christ and consistent believers concur, to show their decided disapprobation of an offender's conduct on Scriptural grounds, by withdrawing from his society, or objecting to communion with him in holy ordinances, it ought to be deemed a very solemn matter: for whatsoever is thus bound or loosed on earth shall be ratified in heaven, however the offender may despise the protest. In all our undertakings we should seek direction by prayer; and we cannot too highly value the promises of God to this effect: all the public concerns of families and Churches should be conducted with social as well as secret prayer: nor should we ever censure or rebuke any man, without at the same time praying for his humiliation and salvation! Whenever we meet in the name of Christ, in our families, or in public ordinances, at any time, or in any place, we should realize his presence in the midst of us; that we may both be impressed with awe of his holy heart-searching eye upon us, and encouraged to expect abundant blessings from him.

V. 23—35.

Whilst we sinners live so entirely on mercy and forgiveness, how backward are we to forgive the repeated offences of our brethren! Yet let us not think that any provocation can authorize us to harbour resentment, or seek revenge. This we can never suppose, if we consider duly, how many and aggravated our former and latter transgressions have been, against our Creator and daily Benefactor; and how ready he is to forgive us, when we repent and seek his face. If he enter into judgment with us, our debt will be found immensely large; all the terrible curses of the law will be adjudged to be our righteous desert; and it will be in vain for us to say, "Have patience with me.

a Mark x. 1. John
x. 40.

AND it came to pass, ^a that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judea, beyond Jordan;

2 And ^b great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

3 ¶ The Pharisees also came unto him, ^c tempting him, and saying unto him, ^d Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

4 And he answered and said unto

them, ^e Have ye not read, ^f that he, which made *them* at the beginning, made them male and female;

5 And ^g said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall ^h cleave to his wife: ⁱ and they twain shall be one flesh?

6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore ^k God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

9. Rom. vii. 2 1 Cor. vii. 10—4. Eph. v.

e xii. 3 xvi. 18.
42. xx. i. 31.
Mark ii. 25. xii.
10. 23. Luke vi.
3. 25.
f Gen. i. 27 v. 2.
Mat. ii. 15.
g Gen. i. 21—24.
h Gen. ii. 24.
i 26. 1 Kings. xi.
2. Ps. lxxvi. 3.
Rom. xii. 9.
k 1 Cor. vi. 16.
vii. 2. 4.
l 1 Cor. vii. 17. Mat.
ii. 14. Mark x.
10. Heb. xiii. 4.

"and I will pay thee all." This the humbled sinner will perceive, and he will only rely on free abounding mercy, through the ransom of the death of Christ; in this way, his sins will be blotted out, and buried in the depths of the sea; and his gentle, forgiving, and compassionate spirit and conduct, towards those who have injured him, or are dependent on him, will prove him a partaker of the Spirit and mind of Christ. But the unhumiliated professor will often betray himself, by a harsh, unforgiving, and unrelenting behaviour to his debtors, his servants, the poor, and especially to those that have offended him. Such men scandalize the cause, and grieve true believers: but they deceive and destroy themselves; and their offended Lord will shortly deliver them, as wicked servants, to the executioners of his vengeance, and the everlasting punishment prepared for the workers of iniquity. (xxv. 41—46.) Let us then examine ourselves, whether *from our hearts* we forgive every one our brother his trespasses. Let us frequently ask ourselves, whether our conduct towards poor debtors, supplicants, or such as have affronted us, resembles the merciful conduct of our Lord towards us: and let us seek more and more for the renewing grace of God, to teach us to forgive others, even as we hope for forgiveness from him.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX. V. 1, 2. This seems to have been our Lord's final departure from Galilee, previous to his crucifixion: but he took a large compass in his journey, and passed through the districts that lay east of Jordan. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 3—6. 'The school of Hillel taught, that a man might put away his wife for any cause. The son of Sirach saith, 'If she go not as thou wouldst have her, cut her off from thy flesh, give her a bill of divorce, and let her go.' (Ecclesiast. xxv. 26.) Josephus saith, 'The law runs thus, He that would be disjoined from his wife, for any cause whatsoever, as many such causes there are, let him give her a bill of divorce. And he confesseth, that he himself put away his wife, after she had borne him three children, because he was not pleased with her behaviour. But the school of Shammah determined, on the contrary, that the wife was only to be put away for adultery.' (Whitby.) (Notes, v. 31, 32. Ex. xx. 14. Mark x. 2—12. Luke xvi. 16—18.) These Pharisees had probably heard that Jesus opposed their decisions concerning divorces; and they were desirous of drawing something from him, which they could repre-

sent as contrary to the law of Moses. With this insidious design, they questioned him, "Whether it were lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" That is, on account of any thing in her temper or person, or for any infirmity which rendered her disagreeable. To this he replied, by referring to the history of the creation, and the original institution of marriage. Intimating, that this was the standard by which such transactions ought to be regulated, as every deviation was an abuse consequent on man's depravity. The Creator first formed Adam, and from his side took the rib whence the woman was made: from this one man and one woman the whole human species descended: and when the Lord brought the woman, Adam acknowledged her a part of himself; and it was added, (either by Adam as immediately inspired, or by Moses,) that "for this cause," in all future ages, "a man should leave father and mother," foregoing many of the comforts, and relinquishing many of the duties, of these endeared relations, and cleave to his wife, as a part of himself. Thus these *two* would constitute, as it were, one body, never more to be separated, except by God himself, who in this appointment of marriage hath joined them together; but to have ever after the same interests, and to share each other's comforts or sorrows, even as the members of the same body do. When marriage was instituted, sin and death had not entered: the sinful cause of separation afterwards mentioned, and the natural dissolution of the union, were therefore not referred to: but they have since been specified, and resemble the cutting off of a mortified limb, and the separation of the parts of the body by death. In all other respects the union is to be considered as indissoluble. It is observable, that Christ inserts the word *twain*, which is not in the original institution, purposely, as it seems, to obviate all misconception of his meaning. (Notes, Gen. ii. 21—25.) 'The Greek word importeth to be glued unto, whereby is signified that strict knot which is between man and wife, as if they were glued together.' (Besa.) 'The Scripture uses the word not seldom for true and chaste love; it ought not therefore to be understood in a gross sense, but of the conjugal affection, with which the husband ought to love and cherish and take care of his wife, as his own bone and flesh.' (Leigh on Dabak, the Hebrew word used Gen. ii. 24.) (Marg. Ref.) The apostle, warning the Corinthians against fornication, says, "He that is joined to an harlot, is one flesh." Hence some have endeavoured to prove, that nothing more is essential to marriage than carnal knowledge; and that every wo-

1 v. 31. Deut.
xviii 1-4. 16
1 Jer. iii 8
Mark 4
m. 19. Mat. ii.
5
p. xv. 8 Zech.
viii. 12. Mat. ii.
19. 14. Mark x.
5
o. iii. 15 viii 31
1 Cor. vi 16
p. Gen. ii 24. vii
7 Jer. vi 16.

7 They say unto him, 'Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, ^m and to put her away?

8 He saith unto them, Moses, ^a because of the hardness of your hearts, ^o suffered you to put away your wives: ^p but from the beginning it was not so.

9 And I say unto you, ^q Whosoever shall put away his wife, ^r except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whose marieth her which is put away, ^s doth commit adultery.

q v. 32. Mark x.
11. 12. Luke xvi.
18. 1 Cor. vii.
10-13 39
r 2 Cor. xxi 11
Jer. iii 8 Ez.
xvi. 8 15 29. 1
Cor. v 11
s Gen. xii 18, 19.
xx 3 Jer. iii 1.
Rom vii 2, 3 1
Cor. vi 4. 11.
39.

man is in fact the wife of him, who first knows her; from which the most detestable inferences have been deduced. But if this were so, such a crime as *fornication* could not exist, nor such a character as a *harlot*; for every female must either be a virgin, a wife, an adulteress, or a widow. The apostle, however, could not mean this: for the woman of whom he spake is supposed to have been previously a *harlot*, not a *virgin* (Note, 1 Cor. vi 15-17: and surely none will say, that when a man becomes one "flesh with a harlot," they are "joined together by God," and man must not put them asunder!" The Lord brought Eve to Adam, and gave her to him, and thus joined them together in marriage, previous to their connubial intercourse: and some established and attested recognition, as well as the consent of parties, is absolutely needful to honourable marriage, and to distinguish those who live in that state from the "adulterers and fornicators, whom "God will judge." The pernicious effects which the author has witnessed, of the licentious sentiments above stated, and the sanction which they received from the names of those who have supported them, and from their *plausible* reasonings, (which seem very convincing to a sensual mind, when under powerful temptation,) render these hints peculiarly needful. It may also be added, that they, who, from erroneous religious motives, either separate themselves from their wives, or husbands, or counsel others to do so, whatever specious arguments they may use, most evidently act in direct violation of Christ's command.

V. 7-9. We find from St. Mark, that our Lord asked the Pharisees what Moses had commanded them; and to this they answered, that he had "commanded to "give a bill, &c." 'Because politic laws are constrained to bear with some things, it followeth not that 'God alloweth them.' (Beza.) (Notes, Ex. xxi. 2. Deut. xxiv. 1-4.) Our Lord showed them, that this was not a *command*, but a *permission*: they were *suffered*, *without punishment by the magistrate*, to put away their wives; because they were so hard-hearted, that they would otherwise have used them ill, or even murdered them: so that this permission was a stigma on the national character, a testimony to the depravity of human nature, a judicial regulation, and a departure from the original institution of marriage, and the meaning of the moral law. The general scope of this reasoning is equally applicable to polygamy. A question has been raised, and copiously disputed, whether they, who, according to this permission, put away their wives, or married others, committed sin against God. But it is a question in which we are little concerned. In a state of sinless perfection, such things would not have been permitted, or desired. Some, no doubt, were very criminal in availing themselves of the permission, and were adulterers in the sight of God,

Others might have stronger reasons and better motives for their conduct: and whatever was sinful in those true believers, who allowed themselves in the practices thus tolerated, was no doubt forgiven by the special mercy of God, on their general repentance. Our Lord, however, added, that thenceforth, whosoever should put away his wife, except for unchastity, (which violates the marriage-covenant, and destroys as it were the very nature of it;) and should marry another woman, would be adjudged an adulterer; as he also would, that should marry the divorced woman. Whatever injustice there might be in the divorce, it could not be adultery *against* the divorced woman, if the man and woman were not put entirely upon a level in this respect: so that, under the Christian dispensation, it is as much adultery for the husband to take another woman, as for the wife to take another man. (Marg. Ref.) Some argue, that as adultery was punishable by death, according to the law of Moses, and the betrothed virgin was considered as the wife of him to whom she was contracted, and included in this law, the word rendered *fornication* should be here understood in its usual sense, *exclusively*: so that the reason, why the woman who had been guilty of fornication *might*, nay, *must* be divorced, was this, 'She was in fact another man's wife; and to retain her would be to live in adultery.' (See *Whitby on the passage*.) This, however, increases the difficulty; for the woman, who was detected at her marriage of unchastity before her espousals, was likewise condemned to die: so that, supposing these three laws rigorously executed, no woman detected after marriage of previous fornication could escape death; and, according to this opinion, no man might marry her, who pleaded guilty of that crime, because she was already another man's wife. (Notes, Lev. xx. 10-19. Deut. xxii. 13-27.) But, in fact, these laws were seldom rigorously executed under the Old Testament; and, as *judicial* regulations, they were not intended for the new dispensation, as of divine obligation, and concerning this our Lord was authoritatively laying down injunctions; for in that case none could be spared, but she who confessed her guilt, and no man on this supposition might marry her: and surely it is very absurd to suppose that a word, constantly used in an ill sense through the whole Scripture, should here be considered as synonymous with *marriage*: for unless the woman who had committed fornication was, by so doing, married to her paramour, the whole argument falls to the ground. Did not many lay hold of such unguarded concessions in reputable writers, to support or palliate a most licentious system, which is secretly doing immense mischief, learned men might possess their peculiar notions undisturbed, at least by the author. The marginal references show, that the word rendered *fornication* is in many places used as a general term, and in some it necessarily requires to be

1 Gen ii 12 Prov
v 15-19 xviii
22 xix 13-14
xxi 9-10 1 Cor
vii 1, 2, 8, 25-
26, 35, 35-36
40 1 Tim iv 3
v 11 15
1 Cor vii 9, 9
17, 35.

10 His disciples say unto him, 'If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry.

11 But he said unto them, "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.

12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from *their* mothers' womb; and there are some eunuchs, * which were made eunuchs of men; and there be eunuchs, † which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.

x Te xxxix. 7
Jvi. 3, 4.

3 1 Cor. vii. 32,
33. ix. 15.

interpreted of adultery: so that, undoubtedly, the common interpretation is the true one. 'Note also hence, that 'according to either interpretation, where it is lawful 'to put away the wife, it is lawful to marry again.' (Whitby.)

V. 10-12. The disciples had imbibed the prejudices of their countrymen: they supposed, that the regulations made by their Lord would in many cases render marriage a source of perpetual uneasiness; and they concluded, that it would be most prudent, and conducive to happiness, to continue unmarried. To this he replied, that all men were not capable of complying with such a restriction, as entire continence was a special gift of God to some, and not to others: for seeing it was his purpose, that the human species should be continued, and that men should generally marry for that purpose, he had so constituted them, that many could not live conscientiously and comfortably in a single state. Indeed some were born with such a temperament of body, that they were all their lives devoid of those inclinations to which others are subject: some were mutilated in infancy, through the avarice or policy of men: and others were successful in their endeavours to subdue their natural inclinations, that they might more entirely dedicate their time and talents to the service of God, and have less encumbrance in so doing: and if any man found himself disposed to, and capable of, that kind of life, it would be good for him not to marry, as he might be more useful in promoting the kingdom of heaven among men. Thus our Lord intimated to the apostles, that, whatever they chose for themselves, they must impose no restrictions on others in this matter. (Notes, 1 Cor. vii. 1-9.) 'That, which all men may obtain by prayer, temperance, and fasting, cannot be called a special gift, or a 'gift proper to some.' (Whitby.)

V. 13-15. We meet with several instances of those, who apply to Christ in behalf of their afflicted relations and friends: but these persons brought their little children, or *infants*, to him, in order that he might lay his hands on them, and pray for them, or bless them. As it is evident that they were in health, and too young to receive instruction, the disciples thought that the parents gave their Lord needless trouble, or that it would be beneath him to notice infants; and they therefore rebuked those who brought them. Yet the conduct of the parents could arise only from a high regard to Christ, and an earnest desire of spiritual blessings on their children: he therefore was much displeased with the disciples, for discouraging the applica-

tion: and directed them to suffer the little children to come to him without molestation; "for of such," added he, "is the kingdom of heaven." He might in part be displeased with the disciples, for so soon forgetting that instructive discourse which has been considered, (Notes, xviii. 1-6:) and doubtless he meant to encourage parents to seek a blessing from him on their children from their earliest infancy; and to teach the children to apply to him as soon as they can understand his words. But the expression, "of such is the kingdom of heaven," seems to mean, that little children are admissible into the visible Church, under the New Testament dispensation, as they had been under that of Moses. Christ did not indeed order these infants to be baptized; for Christian baptism was not then expressly instituted as the initiatory ordinance, and circumcision was still in force; yet the passage seems to give considerable sanction to that method of bringing children to Christ, that they may be admitted among the subjects of his visible kingdom; and we must think those disciples mistaken who object to it, sometimes with arguments that would have equally held good against infant-circumcision, or against bringing infants to Christ, that he might touch them. Indeed, the expression may also intimate that the kingdom of *heavenly* glory is greatly constituted of such as die in infancy. Infants are as capable of regeneration as grown persons: and there is abundant ground to conclude, that all those, who have not lived to commit actual transgressions, though they share in the effects of the first Adam's offence, will also share in the blessings of the second Adam's gracious covenant, without their personal faith and obedience, but not without the regenerating influence of the Spirit of Christ.—What a topic of expostulation would this transaction give the ministers of Christ, if these parents afterwards brought up their children in an unchristian manner, or set them a bad example! Or with the children, if they renounced that Saviour, who had so condescendingly taken them in his arms and blessed them! In what a variety of ways might instructions and admonitions, both to the parents and the children, have been grounded upon it; and what a sweet subject of converse would it afford to the parents, in afterwards instructing the children! What a plea in prayer for them! And might not infant-baptism be improved to similar purposes, did all, who approve and contend for it, bestow true pains to make it a means of grace to themselves, and those concerned?

13 ¶ Then were there † brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: "and the disciples rebuked them.

14 But Jesus said, † Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; † for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

15 And † he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.

xviii 2-5 Gen
xviii 1 9-10 1
Psm 124 Ps
xv 14 5 Jer
xxxi 4 Mark
8 3 Luke xviii
10 6
1 Cor 9 14
xvi 22 xx 31
12 Acts 13 3
54 55
1 Gen xvi 7 8
25-26 xxi 4
xviii xii 7 1
Sam 1 11 22
22 11 18 Mark
x 14 15 Luke
xviii 16
cxi 25 xviii 3
1 Cor xiv 20 1
Pse 11 2
1 Is xl 11 Mark
x 16 1 Cor vii
12 2 Tim iii 15

Mark x. 17. Luke xviii. 18. John vi. 27-29. Acts xvi. 30. Dan. xii. 2. John iii. 15 v. 14 v. 39 vi. 47 68 x. 28. 23 29 35 36. 2. Rom. ii. 7 v. 21 vi. 22 23. 1. Rom. i. 16 v. 12 13. 1. Tit. i. 2. 1. John i. 2. 2. v. 23 v. 31. 1. John i. 17. 1. Sam. ii. 2. Ps. i. 1. 1. Jer. vii. 9. 1. Jer. i. 17. 1. John iv. 8. 10. 16. 1. Lev. xviii. 5. 24. x. x. 11. 12. Luke x. 26-28. Rom. x. 5. Gal. iii. 11-13. 1. Gal. iii. 10 Jam. ii. 10. 1. —v. 21-28. Ex. xx. 12-17. Deut. v. 15-21. Mark x. 19. Luke xviii. 20. Rom. xiii. 8-10. —m. xv. 4-6. Lev. xix. 3. Prov. xxx. 17. Eph. vi. 1, 2.

16 ¶ And, behold, ^a one came and said unto him, Good Master, ^b what good thing shall I do, that I may have ^c eternal life?

17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? ^b there is none good but one, that is, God: ^c but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

18 He saith unto him, ^b Which? Jesus said, ^a Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

19 ^a Honour thy father and thy mo-

ther; and, ^b Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

20 The young man saith unto him, ^a All these things have I kept from my youth up: ^b what lack I yet?

21 Jesus said unto him, ^a If thou wilt be perfect, ^b go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and ^c come and follow me.

22 But when the young man heard that saying, ^a he went away sorrowful: ^b for he had great possessions.

V. 16-22. (Marg. Ref.) We learn from the other evangelists, that the young person here introduced was a ruler: he was also a person of great decency and amiableness in his moral character, and had serious thoughts about religion, and an honourable opinion of Christ. He therefore came running; and, kneeling down to him, he called him "Good Master;" or Teacher; and, with great apparent earnestness and docility, inquired, "What good thing ^a he should do, that he might have eternal life?" The question at first sight may seem equivalent to the inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" But our Lord saw that his judgment was erroneous, and his heart unhumiliated and carnal: he therefore first objected to his giving him, whom he supposed to be a mere man, the title of *good*, as all mere men are evil in themselves, and none is strictly and absolutely good, but the one living and true God, the Fountain and Perfection of goodness and excellency. The remark was the more needful, as the Rabbies affected this title: and it intimated, that the inquirer was not properly sensible of the depravity of his own heart, or of the dignity of the person whom he thus addressed, to whom the title of *good* belonged in a far higher sense than he supposed. He then directed him to keep the commandments of God, if he meant to enter into life, *by the good things that he should do*. This answer was doubtless intended to meet the young man's case: for the knowledge of the holy law is the proper cure of a self-justifying spirit, as it tends to discover the deficiencies and deilements of all human obedience; but probably he expected some external observances and austerities to have been superadded by our Lord, in order to complete his righteousness. He therefore ignorantly replied, by inquiring, which of the commandments he was to keep? Whereas a perfect obedience to all of them is the indispensable condition of life, according to the covenant of works; and "cursed is every ^a one, that continueth not in all things written in the ^b book of the law, to do them." In order therefore to his conviction or detection, our Lord pointed out to him the commandments of the second table, and summed them up in the rule of loving our neighbour as ourselves. But he, regardless of the first table, and ignorant of the spiritual import of the precepts adduced, answered, that "he had kept them all from his youth." He could only

mean the *letter*, and that he was free from the grosser violations of it: for doubtless he had infringed several of them, even in his outward conduct; and he certainly was very far from loving his neighbour as himself. To this he added an inquiry, concerning what was yet wanting to complete his righteousness. But our Lord, to discover to him and others, the evil lurking under these plausible appearances, told him that he yet *lacked one thing*; and that if he would be *perfect*, he must go and sell his estate, distribute the money among the poor, and come, and follow him; and then he should have a better treasure in heaven. This was acting like a skillful physician, who was aware of the patient's disorder, and determined to apply the medicine directly to it. It served at once to prove him far distant from the righteousness of the law, and from the temper required by the Gospel. Not to mention the supreme love of God, had he loved his neighbour as himself, and believed Jesus to speak with divine authority, he would readily have disposed of his wealth, at his command, in relieving the afflicted, when at the same time it would have ensured his own felicity; and had he been a humbled sinner, earnestly seeking mercy and eternal life, as the gift of God through the divine Saviour, he would readily have left all, to have followed him: but the event proved, that his wealth was dearer to him than either God or his neighbour; than Christ, a heavenly treasure, or even his own soul. Doubtless it was his duty to yield a prompt obedience to this command: yet our Lord knew that he would not, and it is evident he intended it as a touchstone by which to discover him to himself. For when he heard that saying, all his pleasing prospects at once vanished, and he departed sorrowful, for he had great possessions. Though reluctant to give up the hope of eternal life; yet he would not at that time renounce his riches for the sake of it. We cannot decide what he afterwards did: he might at length be brought to a more spiritual frame of mind. Certainly all that Christ said to him was suited to humble and convince him; and some would infer his subsequent conversion from St. Mark, who says that *Jesus loved him*: though this may only mean, that he saw a natural amiableness, which excited in him, as Man, a peculiar regard.

* Deut. vi. 10-12
 xxi. 10-18 Job
 xxi. 24, 25 Ps.
 xxi. 6, 7, 16-18
 Prov. ix. 20
 xxx. 9, 9
 x. 29 Luke xii.
 15-21 xvi. 13.
 14, 19-22 xvi.
 21 Cor. i. 25
 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10
 Job. i. 9-11
 ii. 6 v. 1-11
 y. v. 20, xiii. 3
 xxi. 31 John iii.
 25 Acts xiv. 22
 25 xxv. 21
 Jer. xlii. 21
 Mark x. 24, 25
 Luke xviii. 25
 John v. 41
 B xxiv. 22 Mark
 xii. 10-18
 xii. 23, 24 Rom.
 x. 13 xi. 5-7
 1 Cor. xviii. 14
 Num. xi. 23
 Job xlii. 27
 xxvii. 27 Zech.
 xiii. 6 Mark x.
 22 Luke i. 37
 xxvii. 27
 c. 20-22 ix. 9 Deut. xxxiii. 9 Mark i. 17-20 ii. 14 x. 28 Luke v. 11, 27, 28 xiv.
 c. 37 xviii. 28 Phil. ii. 8.

23 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, * That a rich man shall hardly ^v enter into the kingdom of heaven.

24 And again I say unto you, * It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

25 When his disciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, * Who then can be saved?

26 But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men *this* is impossible; ^b but with God all things are possible.

27 Then answered Peter, and said unto him, Behold, * we have forsaken all, and

followed thee; ^d what shall we have therefore?

28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me ^e in the regeneration, ^f when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ^g ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging ^h the twelve tribes of Israel.

29 And ⁱ every one that hath forsaken houses, ^j or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for ^k my name's sake, shall receive ^l an hundred-fold, and shall ^m inherit everlasting life.

30 But ⁿ many *that* are first shall be last, and the last *shall* be first.

Luke vi. 22, John xv. 12, Acts x. 19, 1 Pet. iv. 14, 3 John 7. — m. xlii. 8, 23 — n. xlii. 8, 23 — o. xlii. 8, 23 — p. xlii. 8, 23 — q. xlii. 8, 23 — r. xlii. 8, 23 — s. xlii. 8, 23 — t. xlii. 8, 23 — u. xlii. 8, 23 — v. xlii. 8, 23 — w. xlii. 8, 23 — x. xlii. 8, 23 — y. xlii. 8, 23 — z. xlii. 8, 23 — aa. xlii. 8, 23 — ab. xlii. 8, 23 — ac. xlii. 8, 23 — ad. xlii. 8, 23 — ae. xlii. 8, 23 — af. xlii. 8, 23 — ag. xlii. 8, 23 — ah. xlii. 8, 23 — ai. xlii. 8, 23 — aj. xlii. 8, 23 — ak. xlii. 8, 23 — al. xlii. 8, 23 — am. xlii. 8, 23 — an. xlii. 8, 23 — ao. xlii. 8, 23 — ap. xlii. 8, 23 — aq. xlii. 8, 23 — ar. xlii. 8, 23 — as. xlii. 8, 23 — at. xlii. 8, 23 — au. xlii. 8, 23 — av. xlii. 8, 23 — aw. xlii. 8, 23 — ax. xlii. 8, 23 — ay. xlii. 8, 23 — az. xlii. 8, 23 — ba. xlii. 8, 23 — bb. xlii. 8, 23 — bc. xlii. 8, 23 — bd. xlii. 8, 23 — be. xlii. 8, 23 — bf. xlii. 8, 23 — bg. xlii. 8, 23 — bh. xlii. 8, 23 — bi. xlii. 8, 23 — bj. xlii. 8, 23 — bk. xlii. 8, 23 — bl. xlii. 8, 23 — bm. xlii. 8, 23 — bn. xlii. 8, 23 — bo. xlii. 8, 23 — bp. xlii. 8, 23 — bq. xlii. 8, 23 — br. xlii. 8, 23 — bs. xlii. 8, 23 — bt. xlii. 8, 23 — bu. xlii. 8, 23 — bv. xlii. 8, 23 — bw. xlii. 8, 23 — bx. xlii. 8, 23 — by. xlii. 8, 23 — bz. xlii. 8, 23 — ca. xlii. 8, 23 — cb. xlii. 8, 23 — cc. xlii. 8, 23 — cd. xlii. 8, 23 — ce. xlii. 8, 23 — cf. xlii. 8, 23 — cg. xlii. 8, 23 — ch. xlii. 8, 23 — ci. xlii. 8, 23 — cj. xlii. 8, 23 — ck. xlii. 8, 23 — cl. xlii. 8, 23 — cm. xlii. 8, 23 — cn. xlii. 8, 23 — co. xlii. 8, 23 — cp. xlii. 8, 23 — cq. xlii. 8, 23 — cr. xlii. 8, 23 — cs. xlii. 8, 23 — ct. xlii. 8, 23 — cu. xlii. 8, 23 — cv. xlii. 8, 23 — cw. xlii. 8, 23 — cx. xlii. 8, 23 — cy. xlii. 8, 23 — cz. xlii. 8, 23 — da. xlii. 8, 23 — db. xlii. 8, 23 — dc. xlii. 8, 23 — dd. xlii. 8, 23 — de. xlii. 8, 23 — df. xlii. 8, 23 — dg. xlii. 8, 23 — dh. xlii. 8, 23 — di. xlii. 8, 23 — dj. xlii. 8, 23 — dk. xlii. 8, 23 — dl. xlii. 8, 23 — dm. xlii. 8, 23 — dn. xlii. 8, 23 — do. xlii. 8, 23 — dp. xlii. 8, 23 — dq. xlii. 8, 23 — dr. xlii. 8, 23 — ds. xlii. 8, 23 — dt. xlii. 8, 23 — du. xlii. 8, 23 — dv. xlii. 8, 23 — dw. xlii. 8, 23 — dx. xlii. 8, 23 — dy. xlii. 8, 23 — dz. xlii. 8, 23 — ea. xlii. 8, 23 — eb. xlii. 8, 23 — ec. xlii. 8, 23 — ed. xlii. 8, 23 — ee. xlii. 8, 23 — ef. xlii. 8, 23 — eg. xlii. 8, 23 — eh. xlii. 8, 23 — ei. xlii. 8, 23 — ej. xlii. 8, 23 — ek. xlii. 8, 23 — el. xlii. 8, 23 — em. xlii. 8, 23 — en. xlii. 8, 23 — eo. xlii. 8, 23 — ep. xlii. 8, 23 — eq. xlii. 8, 23 — er. xlii. 8, 23 — es. xlii. 8, 23 — et. xlii. 8, 23 — eu. xlii. 8, 23 — ev. xlii. 8, 23 — ew. xlii. 8, 23 — ex. xlii. 8, 23 — ey. xlii. 8, 23 — ez. xlii. 8, 23 — fa. xlii. 8, 23 — fb. xlii. 8, 23 — fc. xlii. 8, 23 — fd. xlii. 8, 23 — fe. xlii. 8, 23 — ff. xlii. 8, 23 — fg. xlii. 8, 23 — fh. xlii. 8, 23 — fi. xlii. 8, 23 — fj. xlii. 8, 23 — fk. xlii. 8, 23 — fl. xlii. 8, 23 — fm. xlii. 8, 23 — fn. xlii. 8, 23 — fo. xlii. 8, 23 — fp. xlii. 8, 23 — fq. xlii. 8, 23 — fr. xlii. 8, 23 — fs. xlii. 8, 23 — ft. xlii. 8, 23 — fu. xlii. 8, 23 — fv. xlii. 8, 23 — fw. xlii. 8, 23 — fx. xlii. 8, 23 — fy. xlii. 8, 23 — fz. xlii. 8, 23 — ga. xlii. 8, 23 — gb. xlii. 8, 23 — gc. xlii. 8, 23 — gd. xlii. 8, 23 — ge. xlii. 8, 23 — gf. xlii. 8, 23 — gg. xlii. 8, 23 — gh. xlii. 8, 23 — gi. xlii. 8, 23 — gj. xlii. 8, 23 — gk. xlii. 8, 23 — gl. xlii. 8, 23 — gm. xlii. 8, 23 — gn. xlii. 8, 23 — go. xlii. 8, 23 — gp. xlii. 8, 23 — gq. xlii. 8, 23 — gr. xlii. 8, 23 — gs. xlii. 8, 23 — gt. xlii. 8, 23 — gu. xlii. 8, 23 — gv. xlii. 8, 23 — gw. xlii. 8, 23 — gx. xlii. 8, 23 — gy. xlii. 8, 23 — gz. xlii. 8, 23 — ha. xlii. 8, 23 — hb. xlii. 8, 23 — hc. xlii. 8, 23 — hd. xlii. 8, 23 — he. xlii. 8, 23 — hf. xlii. 8, 23 — hg. xlii. 8, 23 — hh. xlii. 8, 23 — hi. xlii. 8, 23 — hj. xlii. 8, 23 — hk. xlii. 8, 23 — hl. xlii. 8, 23 — hm. xlii. 8, 23 — hn. xlii. 8, 23 — ho. xlii. 8, 23 — hp. xlii. 8, 23 — hq. xlii. 8, 23 — hr. xlii. 8, 23 — hs. xlii. 8, 23 — ht. xlii. 8, 23 — hu. xlii. 8, 23 — hv. xlii. 8, 23 — hw. xlii. 8, 23 — hx. 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V. 23-26. (*Marg. Ref.*) This incident afforded our Lord an occasion of showing the extreme peril of riches. He observed, as one in astonishment, how difficult it was for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, or to become his true subject and disciple. And, he added, with affectionate application to the apostles as his children, that it "was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man," (or "one that trusted in riches,") "to enter into the kingdom of heaven." Some would read a *cable*, instead of a *camel*: but it seems to have been a proverbial expression, signifying extreme difficulty or apparent impossibility. Riches tend to increase pride, covetousness, and self-indulgence; they purchase flatterers, and exclude faithful reprovers; they prejudice the mind against the humbling truths and self-denying precepts of Christ; and they increase the number and force of those obstacles that must be broken through, and the supposed value of those objects that must be renounced, if a man would become a disciple of Christ. Far more in proportion of the poor than of the rich are converted, and enter the kingdom of grace and of glory; and the conversion of a very wealthy man seems the peculiar triumph of almighty grace. The disciples, however, who were poor and felt their own difficulties, and probably thought that the rich had more advantages for religion than themselves, were exceedingly astonished at this saying, and exclaimed, "Who then can be saved?" But Jesus, to show them that he meant not that all rich persons must be lost, but to warn them against the desire of such dangerous distinctions, assured them, that "with men indeed" it was impossible, but with God all things were possible.

V. 27, 28. (*Marg. Ref.*) The young ruler's departure from Christ, and his observations upon it, led Peter to recollect that he and the other apostles had actually left all to follow him; and it seems to have excited some degree of self-complacency. With his usual forwardness, he therefore reminded Jesus of this, and inquired what reward they should receive? Indeed Peter's *all* had been only a few fishing nets, a boat, and other things of small value: yet they were the means of obtaining a mainte-

nance; and the same faith, which induced him to renounce them for Christ's sake, would have led him to make larger sacrifices, if he had been called to it, as he afterwards was. Our Lord therefore overlooked what was amiss, and assured the apostles, that they, who had followed him *in the regeneration*, should at length be advanced and honoured in a peculiar manner. If we join the expression, *in the regeneration*, to the preceding clause, it may mean the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit on their hearts, disposing them to obey his call. But it may and probably should be joined to the subsequent clause; and then it refers to the time when the apostles would receive their full recompense; even "when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory." (xxv. 31.) Then he will make all things new; and then they will be his assessors in judgment; the world and the Church will be judged according to their doctrine; and they will appear distinguished in an especial manner from all their brethren in Christ. Some reference may perhaps be had to the establishment of the Christian Church, and the condemnation of the Jewish nation in consequence of their ministry: but the day of judgment seems immediately intended. Judas was at this time one of the number: but he had never truly followed Christ; when he by transgression fell, another was appointed in his place, and the number twelve was continued, with reference to the twelve tribes of which Israel was originally constituted. "In the day of the great restoration of all things, when the elect shall enter on a new life of unspeakable glory, even in that great and dreadful day, when the Son of man shall sit upon his throne of majesty, to judge the quick and the dead;" then shall ye, my apostles, who are now despicable and mean, have the honour to sit upon several thrones, to second and assist this awful act of final judgment, on the rebellious tribes of Israel. (*Bp. Hall.*)

V. 29, 30. Though a peculiar dignity would be reserved to the apostles: yet every one, that had forsaken any temporal possession, or relative comfort, for his sake and that of the Gospel, would receive an hundred-fold increase of happiness for it, even in this life, (notwith-

CHAP. XX.

Jesus speaks a parable of labourers sent at different hours into a vineyard, and ap-

plies it, 1—16. He foretels his own death and resurrection, 17—19; rejects the request of the mother of James and

standing the persecutions, to which he would be exposed.) as well as inherit eternal life at last. This must be understood especially of divine consolations, which commonly most abound when great sacrifices are made, or great hardships endured, for conscience' sake : and which are an hundred fold better than all earthly comforts and possessions, as *they* best know who have most experienced them. But we may also include those providential interpositions, by which the Lord often makes up, in outward comforts of a far more valuable nature, all our losses for his sake : for no doubt the promise has respect to all times and places. To this our Lord added, "that many that were first should be last, and the last first." He doubtless referred to the moral and amiable young man, that was found to be further from the kingdom of heaven than many publicans and harlots, who became first, when he was cast behind : but the rule has reference to a variety of cases. Vile prodigals often repent, and get before decent moralists : the Gentile converts obtained the priority to the Jewish nation ; false professors apostatize, and open persecutors become preachers of the Gospel : and they, who have been the grief and reproach of families and neighbourhoods, sometimes become their chief credit and blessing ; whilst more plausible characters are thus rendered more inveterate against the truth.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—12.

We are again called to follow with our meditations the divine Saviour, as "he went about doing good, and "endured the contradiction of sinners against himself : " let us not fail to look earnestly at him, that we may not be wearied in well-doing by the ingratitude and perverseness of our fellow sinners. Human depravity has deranged the appointments of the all-wise Creator, and perverted them to the introduction of accumulated misery ; and the unjust oppressors share the consequences with those whom they cruelly oppress : but the Gospel is intended to soften the hard heart, and meliorate the harsh spirits of men, as well as to regulate their passions, and subdue their iniquities. When it is really embraced, its sacred energy renders them affectionate relatives and faithful friends : it teaches them to bear with the infirmities, and to bear the burdens of those with whom they are connected ; and to consider their interest, peace, and happiness, more than their own indulgence or convenience. This will reduce marriage, in good measure, to its original institution ; and teach men to regulate their conduct respecting it by the law of God, and not by their own humour, passion, or caprice. The true Christian will consider his wife as the gift and appointment of the Lord ; and his union with her as God's ordinance ; he will learn to love her as his own flesh ; and no more want a separation on every gust of passion or incidental uneasiness, than he would desire to have his limb cut off, or his flesh mangled, every time he feels pain or weariness. This he regards as a desperate and most pain-

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ful remedy, in case of an incurable gangrene. He will consider the regulations of God's word as the dictates of wisdom and love, and every deviation as a source of temptation and disquietude, and the bane of domestic felicity ; and he will perceive that this view of the marriage-union, as indissoluble, and as an inseparable conjunction of interests and comforts till death, gives the most effectual motives to persevering endeavours for mutual peace and harmony. Should a Christian even be united with an unconverted person, (which is indeed a heavy affliction :) he will see it best to take it up as his cross, and to submit to the will of God, in thus correcting him ; endeavouring to extract good from it, and expecting grace sufficient to support him under it : this he will perceive to be far preferable to any irregular method of dissolving the union. As to ungodly persons, it is proper that their passions should be so restrained by human laws, formed according to the law of God, that they may not prove injurious to the peace of society. It does not indeed follow, that "if the case of a man be so with his wife, it is *generally* "not good to marry : " but it certainly proves, that men should enter into this state with great seriousness, consideration, and fervent prayer ; that they should not form the indissoluble union with one, whose external appearance or riches are the chief recommendation ; and that Christians should be very careful not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. As to the rest, our gracious Lord has imposed upon us no rigorous restrictions ; but has left each of his disciples to choose that state of life in which he can serve God, and mind the concerns of his soul, with most comfort and least distraction : and his condescending and considerate statement of this difficult subject forms a proper example for his people to imitate, in their conduct towards one another.

V. 13—15.

The training up of children in true religion is one grand design of God in marriage ; so it behooves all men to have respect to this in every step they take about it. And all Christians should bring their children to the gracious Saviour, at, or even before, their birth, that he may bless them with all his spiritual blessings. Whether they deem it right to devote their infant offspring to him in baptism, or form other conclusions on that controverted subject ; they should certainly agree in giving them up to him, and bringing them up for him. We may take encouragement, in attending to these important duties, from the very rebuke which Christ gave his disciples, and from his readiness to grant the desire of these parents for their children : nor can we much doubt, but he really received and blessed them as the lambs of his flock. Whilst we teach our children, as they become capable of learning, how ready the condescending Son of God is to answer their lisping petitions, and to accept of them as his disciples, we may be well satisfied, that he hath taken to his heavenly kingdom such of them as died in their infancy : for doubtless the covenant is made with the believer, for

John in chaff of her sons: and represses the indignation and ambition of the other

apostles, 20—29; and gives sight to two blind men, 30—34.

the good of this part of his offspring in an especial manner. If then Christian parents have their beloved branches cropt in the bud, they cannot surely have cause to complain; or to think much of their pain, care, or trouble, when they are made the instruments of God in raising up children to him, who may inherit his everlasting kingdom.

V. 16—22.

It is necessary that we inculcate on those, who are put under our care, not only a decency of moral conduct, and an external regard to religion, but an attention to the Gospel, as the only remedy for lost sinners: otherwise, they may appear very amiable, serious, and earnest about eternal life, yea, they may show some respect to Christ and his precepts, and yet never know their need of his precious salvation. Many abstain from gross vices, through pride, and regard to character, interest, health, or outward peace, but remain entirely inattentive to their obligations towards God, and rest in the outward letter of the commandments which respect their neighbours: and they are ready to say, "all these have I kept from my youth;" when ten thousand instances of disobedience, in thought, word, and deed, are marked against them in the book of God, to be produced, to their conviction and confusion at the day of judgment. Indeed, no man can enter into life, who doth not habitually aim to keep the commandments of God: and wilful customary transgression will prove many professors of the Gospel to be further from the kingdom of God, than even this ruler. But "there is none righteous, no not one." It is therefore proper sometimes to task self-sufficient inquirers; and when they proudly ask, "What lack I yet?" to point out to them more and more of their duty, according to the spiritual and extensive law of God. This may lead them into an acquaintance with their own weakness and depravity, and detect the secret pride and worldliness of their hearts; and so prepare the way for their understanding and welcoming the Gospel of free salvation. Not only does the law require us, (if Providence call us to it,) to part with our substance; or even our lives, for the glory of God and the good of our neighbours; but except a man be ready to forsake all that he hath for Christ's sake, he cannot be his disciple, or be saved according to the Gospel. No unregenerate man will comply either with the precept of the law, or the requisition of Christ, when he is fairly put to the trial. In this manner, numbers "forsake him, loving this present world:" they have their convictions and desires, but the sacrifice insisted on is too valuable; therefore they depart sorrowful, perhaps trembling. This is peculiarly the case with those who have great possessions, and who live in trying times. Few, in comparison of the numbers of those who call Christ, Lord, Lord, seem prepared for obedience, should he bid them "sell all" and give to the poor, and come, and follow him, that "they may have a treasure in heaven." Many refuse, at his express command, to part with the most trivial interest or indulgence: many will not give even a moderate pro-

portion of their goods to the poor, notwithstanding all the promises made to those, who do this out of faith and love to Christ. It behooves us then to try ourselves in these matters, for the Lord will ere long put us to the trial.

V. 23—30.

Nothing more fully proves men's want of faith than their eagerness to be rich, though Christ hath spoken, in so alarming a manner, concerning the additional dangers to which riches expose their precious souls! Yet who almost does not labour to be rich, and to enrich his children? Who does not associate the idea of wealth with that of felicity? Who, that hath riches, doth not confide in them as a substantial advantage? And who, that is poor, is not tempted to envy the wealthy? But experience fatally confirms the declarations of Christ, and proves that this earnestness is like toiling to build a high wall, to shut themselves and their children out of heaven: for in this manner, many that will be rich fall into fatal snares, and involve their families in every kind of ruinous temptation, to their everlasting perdition. (1 Tim. vi. 6—10.) Such assertions will not only offend unbelievers: even disciples will be astonished at them, and be ready to think that none then can be saved. Indeed, not many of the rich and honourable of the earth are called, but God's people are generally found among the poor; and the difficulties in the way of the wealthy sinner's conversion are so many, and so insurmountable by man, that we should have no hope of them, except as we know that with God all things are possible. And, blessed be his name, he surprises us with some few demonstrations of the omnipotence of his grace, even in these degenerate days: here and there a very wealthy person is brought forth, and appears eminent for humility, simplicity, spirituality, and fruitfulness: some of this kind are even found among those who are *growing rich* from inferior circumstances; but none among those, that *will* be rich, or who trust, idolize, or love riches. What we here read, however, should surely make us willing to be poor, to beware of covetousness, and to pity and pray for the rich, as we would for men at sea in a violent storm, whom nothing but an extraordinary interposition of God could save from being swallowed up by the tempestuous waves: and in all our labours of love, we may still apply this rule, even to the most abandoned and hardened, that "with God all things are possible." But whether a man have a kingdom, or only a fishing boat, if he be duly humbled as a sinner, and earnestly seek eternal life from the Saviour, he will, at his call, leave all, and follow him; and if he be allowed to keep his substance, he will learn to use it in his service. Indeed, mixtures of self-preference often tarnish our conscious integrity and gratitude to him, who hath made us to differ: yet our gracious Lord accepts his own work, and pardons our evil: and if we here follow him with simplicity, he will at length cause us to inherit "a crown of glory, that fadeth not away." Nay, he hath promised most abun-

h Mark x. 32—
24 Luke xviii
31—31 John xii
12
1 John 11 xxi 13
Gen xvi 17
John xv 15
Acts x 41
h xxi 12, xxi 29, s
23 xxvi 2 Ps
11—3 xxvi 1
for Isai l. 1
Isa lxi Dan ix
24—27 Acts ii 23 iv 26, 28.

17 ¶ And ^b Jesus, going up to Jeru-
salem ^c took the twelve disciples apart in
the way, and said unto them,
18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem:
and the Son of man shall be betrayed
unto the chief priests and unto the scribes,

and ^d they shall condemn him to death,
19 And ^e shall deliver him to the
Gentiles ^f to mock, and to scourge, and
to crucify him: ^g and the third day he
shall rise again.

h xxvi 66, xxviii
1 Marcan. c. 1
65 Luke xxi
70
xxvi 2, xxviii
Mar. xv 1, 10,
see Luke xxviii
1, see John
xviii 28 xxviii
Acts xxi 13—16,
xxviii 23—25, Luke xxviii 13, John xxi 1—4
xxii 2 Luke xxviii 46 1 Cor xvi 4

workmen at the latter end of the day, is pleased to give
an equal retribution to those that came latest into the
vineyard with those that came at first; making good
his promise and agreement with the first, while he is
bountiful unto the latter; cannot be challenged to have
done any wrong to the first in his liberality to the last:
even so, God, the great Master of this earthly family,
having called some more early to the service and pro-
fession of his name, some later, if he shall give a like
gracious remuneration to all, cannot justly be excepted
against; since, if some have cause to magnify his
bounty, yet no man has cause to complain.' (*Bp. Hall.*)
Some expositors refer the different hours of the day to
several periods in the history of Israel: and others to the
times when the Jews, and afterwards the Gentiles, were
brought into the Christian Church; but it is very difficult
to make the circumstances accord to these events. With
more plausibility they may be applied to the conversion of
sinners, at the earlier and latter stages of human life; for
thus indeed one man serves the Lord longer than another.
(*Marg. Ref.*) Yet this must not be strained too far: for
it would be absurd to suppose that any real Christians, at
the great day of account, will murmur at the appointments
of the judge, or boast of their own services. It is there-
fore rather a description of the state of the visible Church,
and an illustration of the maxim, "the last shall be first,
and the first last," in all its references. Many out-
wardly embrace Christianity, who are not made humble
and spiritual: many real Christians, who have been early
converted, and preserved from outward vices, do not for a
time understand the case of their fellow-servants who are
called at a later hour. Men are apt to over-rate their own
services, and to derogate from those of their neighbours.
Innumerable objections are started against the methods of
divine grace: the Jews could not endure the admission
of the Gentiles to share all the privileges of the people of
God; though there was no difference, save that they were
called at a later period into the vineyard: the elder brother
thought himself wronged, when the prodigal was wel-
comed home: The Pharisees were offended at Christ's
attention to publicans and harlots: and the freeness of
salvation to the chief of sinners hath always stumbled
moralists and formalists, who boast of having "borne the
burden and heat of the day." But such objections are
easily answered: the Lord punishes none above their
deserts, and recompenses, one way or other, every service
that is performed for him; he does not injustice to any, by
showing extraordinary grace to some; and he will, at the
close of the day, if not before, convince all the world of
his own equity, truth, and goodness, and of the pride,
ignorance, and selfishness of these murmurers. He will
prove his right to do what he will with his own, to the
full satisfaction of his friends, and the final confusion of

every one, whose "eye is evil because he is good." He
will fulfil his largest promises to each believer, in what-
ever period of the Church, or in whatever time of his life,
he becomes a labourer in the vineyard: and he will show,
that in real grace, as well as in privilege and consolation,
many that are latest converted exceed those who have
been longer in the service of Christ. But the concluding
sentence evidently shows, that professors of religion in
general were especially intended, and that they were ad-
dressed according to *their own opinion of themselves*, and
not according to the *real state of their souls*. (*Marg. Ref.*)
—There is a parable, not wholly dissimilar, in the Jewish
Talmud; and some *Christian* expositors seem to think,
that our Lord took this from what was then extant of it;
but *omitted* some things which *should be added*, in order to
a right understanding of the subject! especially, that the
labourers, who came late into the vineyard, were so dili-
gent, that in a short time they performed as much as the
others had done in the whole day; and were chosen, be-
cause known to be men of remarkable industry. This,
they think, is necessary to make the parable consist with
every man being rewarded according to his works. But
Dr. Doddridge has very justly called the parable of the
Talmudists an *insipid imitation*: and we may add, that it
is a perversion of the parable before us, in opposition
to the grand principles of the Gospel. The *nature and
motives* of our works, and not merely the *quantity*, must
be taken into the account at the great day; and the
reward be made accordingly: but this is not the im-
mediate subject of the parable, which has above been
shown.

Called, &c. (16.) The word *called* sometimes means
invited, or favoured with the means of grace; and at others
effectual vocation. Many are called in the former sense,
who will at last appear to have been at best only plausible
hypocrites. 'But those, whom "God hath from the
beginning chosen unto salvation, through sanctification
of the Spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto they
are called by the Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory
of our Lord Jesus Christ," "through grace obey the call-
ing; they be made the children of God by adoption;
they be made like the image of his only begotten Son
Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works, and
at length by God's mercy they attain to everlasting fel-
city." (17 Article.) (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 17—19. (*Marg. Ref.*) 'Humanly speaking, it
was much more probable that Jesus should be privately
assassinated, or stoned, as was before attempted, than
that he should have been thus solemnly condemned, and
delivered up to crucifixion. But "all this was done,
that the Scriptures might be fulfilled." (*Doddridge.*)—
'Christ goeth to the cross, necessarily, yet willingly.'
(*Beza.*)

a Mark x. 35.
 b Ps. 21. 9. xxi.
 c 56 Mark xv. 40.
 d Salome.
 e ii. 11. vii. 2.
 f xiv. 3. xv. 25.
 g xxi. 17.
 h 22 1 Kings iii.
 i 2 Esdr.
 j Mark vi. 22.
 k 26 51 Luke
 l xvi. 41 John
 m xv. 7.
 n xxi. 1. xix. 28.
 o Jer. xiv. 5. Mark
 p 37 Luke xxi. 1.
 q 24 Rom. xii. 0.
 r Phil. i. 3.
 s 1 Kings ii. 19.
 t 24 2. 9. x. 1.
 u Mark xvi. 19.
 v Rom. vii. 31.
 w Col. i. 1.
 x Luke xii. 0.
 y 21 xii. 11. Acts
 z i. 6.
 a Mark x. 30.
 b Rom. viii. 26.
 c Jam. i. 3.
 d xxvi. 39. 42. Ps.
 e lxxv. 3. Jer. xxi.
 f 19. 8c. Mark
 g xiv. 36. Luke
 h xxi. 42. John
 i x. 42.
 j b Mark x. 39.
 k Luke xii. 50.
 l 39.
 m Prov. xli. 18.
 n d Acts xii. 2.
 o Rom. viii. 17.
 p Col. i. 21. 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12. Rev. i. 9.

20 ¶ Then ^a came to him ^b the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, ^c worshipping ^d him, and desiring a certain thing of him.

21 And he said unto her, ^e What wilt thou? She saith unto him, ^f Grant that these my two sons may sit, ^g the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, ^h in thy kingdom.

22 But Jesus answered and said, ⁱ Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink ^j of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be ^k baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, ^l We are able.

23 And he saith unto them, ^m Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but ⁿ it shall be

given to them ^o for whom it is prepared of my Father.

24 And when the ten heard it, ^p they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

25 But Jesus ^q called them ^r unto him, and said, Ye know that ^s the princes of the Gentiles ^t exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

26 But ^u it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your ^v minister;

27 And whosoever will be chief among you, ^w let him be your servant:

28 Even as the Son of man ^x came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, ^y and to give his life a ransom ^z for many.

1 Cor. ix. 15—23. 2 Cor. ix. 5. xi. 5. 23. xii. 15. — Luke xxi. 27. John x. 4—8. Heb. v. 6. — 6 Jo. xxviii. 24. Ps. xlix. 7. Is. liii. 0. 11. Dan. 9. 26. John x. 15. xi. 50—52. Rom. vi. 12—26. Gal. iii. 13. Fph. i. 7. 1 Tim. ii. 6. Tit. ii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 19. ii. 24. iii. 18. Rev. v. 8, 9. — p xxi. 28. Mark xxi. 24. Rom. v. 15—19. Heb. ix. 28. 1 John ii. 2.

a Mark x. 35.
 b Ps. 21. 9. 1 Cor. 1.
 c 56 Mark xv. 40.
 d Salome.
 e ii. 11. vii. 2.
 f xiv. 3. xv. 25.
 g xxi. 17.
 h 22 1 Kings iii.
 i 2 Esdr.
 j Mark vi. 22.
 k 26 51 Luke
 l xvi. 41 John
 m xv. 7.
 n xxi. 1. xix. 28.
 o Jer. xiv. 5. Mark
 p 37 Luke xxi. 1.
 q 24 Rom. xii. 0.
 r Phil. i. 3.
 s 1 Kings ii. 19.
 t 24 2. 9. x. 1.
 u Mark xvi. 19.
 v Rom. vii. 31.
 w Col. i. 1.
 x Luke xii. 0.
 y 21 xii. 11. Acts
 z i. 6.
 a Mark x. 30.
 b Rom. viii. 26.
 c Jam. i. 3.
 d xxvi. 39. 42. Ps.
 e lxxv. 3. Jer. xxi.
 f 19. 8c. Mark
 g xiv. 36. Luke
 h xxi. 42. John
 i x. 42.
 j b Mark x. 39.
 k Luke xii. 50.
 l 39.
 m Prov. xli. 18.
 n d Acts xii. 2.
 o Rom. viii. 17.
 p Col. i. 21. 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12. Rev. i. 9.

V. 20—23. Perhaps Zebedee, the father of James and John, was dead before this time, or he was not so constant a follower of Christ as his wife was; so that she is mentioned as “the mother of Zebedee’s children.” At their desire, in their name, and with them, she prostrated herself before Christ, and besought him to grant her one request; seeming to expect that he would engage his word before the petition was made. And when required to propose it, she asked that her two sons might have the chief places of honour and authority in his kingdom. Our Lord had been discoursing of his sufferings, death, and resurrection; but the apostles were too prejudiced in that particular to understand his meaning. They were, however, continually expecting that he would appear in his glory; and probably Salome (*Marg. Ref.*) had respect to the twelve thrones which he had promised to the apostles, the two principal of which she wished to engage for her sons; being emboldened to make such a request by the special favour which our Lord had shown to them. But Jesus told her and them, that they knew not the nature or consequences of their request: for the chief preferences which he had to bestow would expose those who obtained them to the largest share of suffering. He therefore demanded, whether they were able to drink of his cup, and to be baptized with his baptism? He was about to be betrayed, condemned, scourged, mocked, and crucified: and were they prepared to pledge him in this cup, and to be initiated into his service by this baptism? Either they did not duly attend to the meaning of the question, or they had too great a confidence in themselves, when they answered, that “they were able.” He assured them, however, that this would be the case, and that they would be enabled to endure persecutions and sufferings for his sake; but that the highest honours of his kingdom were not now to be disposed of by him, to gratify the ambition of any favourite: in this sense, they were not his to give, as Mediator, “save to those for whom they

“had been prepared of the Father;” for that matter had been previously determined, in perfect harmony, between the Father and the Son. James was the first of the apostles who suffered martyrdom: John survived all the rest, and is not supposed to have died a violent death. He, however, endured hardships, and persecutions, stripes, contempt, and suffering, from the enmity of the world, for the sake of Christ and the Gospel; and thus it may be said that he drank of Christ’s cup, and was baptized with his baptism. Our Lord might indeed by a strong figure of speech be said to have been immersed in sufferings, when he endured the wrath of God as the propitiation for our sins; but the lighter afflictions of the apostles, connected with abundant joys and consolation, must be allowed, in this sense, to have been another and a far milder kind of baptism than his. (*Marg. Ref.*) “None of Christ’s disciples imagined he had promised the supremacy to Peter: for then neither would these two persons have desired it, nor would the rest have contended for it afterwards.” (*Whitby.*)

V. 24—28. The other apostles were so ambitious of the chief place in the kingdom as James and John, notwithstanding our Lord’s former discourse on this subject. (*Marg. Ref.*) They were therefore angry with the two brothers, for taking an undue advantage in this contested point. But Jesus, aware of their resentment and ambition, was pleased to argue the case with them. He therefore showed them the difference between his kingdom and those of the nations. These rulers indeed were ambitious of *lordly authority*, in order to gratify their love of domineering, and of being flattered and had in honour, and every inferior ruler copied their example; but this resulted from false notions of greatness, and from the pride of the human heart. Such a conduct, however, might consist with the characters of conquerors and tyrants among the Gentiles; but it was wholly unsuitable to the rulers of God’s people, and most of all to the

q Mark x. 46—52

Lukexviii. 35—

46

v. 7—21 xi.

2. xxi. 1—14 xi.

cxiiv. 8 Is.

xx. 1. 1. xxv. 13

5. 6. iii. 6. 13

Luk. x. 1. 1. 2.

Luk. v. 8. xiv.

21. John x. 1.

8c.

4. xii. 23. xv. 22

xxi. 9. xxiii. 45

Apo. i. 10.

Rom. i. 1. 1.

Luk. x. 1. 1. 1.

Luk. x. 1. 1. 1.

Luk. xi. 6—10

viii. 1. ne 39 Col. iv. 2. 1. 1. thes. v. 17.

29 ¶ And ^a as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.

30 And, behold, ^a two blind men sitting by the way-side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying,

^a Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* Son of David!

31 And the multitude ^a rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have

mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* Son of David!

32 And Jesus stood still, and called ^a them, and said, ^a What wilt thou that I shall do unto you?

33 They say unto him ^a Lord, that our eyes may be opened.

34 So ^a Jesus had compassion on them, and ^a touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, ^a and they followed him.

x 21. Ez. xxviii.

7. Act. x. 22.

Phil. v. 6.

y. Ps. cxlix. 15.

Psa. i. 7—19.

z. 1a. 18. xiv. 14.

8. 12. Ps. cxi.

8. Luke vi. 13.

John. xi. 37.

23. He. ii. 17.

15. 16. 1. Pet.

iii. 8.

a. 1. 29. Mark. vi.

8. 12. Luke. xiv.

21. John. 6. 7.

b. viii. 15. 1. Cor.

6. 7. 1. Luke

xviii. 43. Act.

xxvi. 18.

spiritual pastors of his flock. It must not be at all the case with them: instead of aspiring to dominion, and lording it over God's heritage, he, that would indeed be great among them, must become the menial servant of the whole company, and stoop to the lowest and most laborious employments, in order to be the more useful. This humility, self-abasement, and diligence, would at length render him the chief among them: whilst a contrary conduct would tend to a man's disgrace and degradation. Of this way to be chief in the kingdom, he had, and would set them an example: he appeared among them as the Son of man, not to assume external authority, and to be ministered to by courtiers and dependents; but to be a servant to them, and to all who would require of him any thing conducive to their good. And, after spending his days in this manner, he was about to lay down his life, as a ransom for the souls of multitudes, even of all that should ever believe in his name; "suffering once for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."—Certainly, this does not prove that Christians must not be kings or rulers; but, only, that they must not be ambitious and tyrannical. Government and discipline are also necessary to the Church: but lordly power, the pride of life, dominion over conscience, and the spirit of persecution, are not necessary to its rulers, under any form of government, though too common in most ages and places.

V. 29—34. (Notes, Mark x. 46—52. Marg. Ref.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—16.

The pride of the human heart, and its enmity to the sovereignty of God, render it very difficult to convince men of the justice and goodness of his dispensations: yet nothing can be more certain, than that "he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works;" and this may be evidently proved, in respect of those parts of his plan, with which we are acquainted, if we impartially judge of them, according to the rules established in human society for the conduct of men towards subjects, servants, and dependents, and for the disposal of their property. In every age, the great Owner of the vineyard comes, by his ministers, to hire labourers, and he condescends to take those, who have been rebels against him and servants of another master; and, having pardoned and reconciled them, he sends them into his vineyard, to labour in their several stations, to promote the common cause of his Church. They, who are early in life called by his grace and yield themselves to his service, are peculiarly favoured;

for "his yoke is easy, and his burden is light." They may deem themselves happy, in being preserved from doing mischief, and from forming bad habits and connexions; and in being early habituated to do good, and associated with the excellent of the earth. Yet they, who have wasted their youth in vanity and sin, are invited to enter the Lord's service at a later period: and the case of those, who have not before heard the Gospel, but have loitered "because no man hath hired them," is more hopeful, than that of such, as have long withstood the invitations of the word and the convictions of their own conscience. We are, however, authorized even to the eleventh hour, to remonstrate with those who "stand all the day idle," and to call upon them to enter the Lord's vineyard; assuring them, that "whatever is right, that they shall receive." To the last, it is written over mercy's gate, "knock, and it shall be opened;" but life is uncertain, and it is madness for men to procrastinate, when they know not how soon death may for ever bar the door, and leave them to everlasting and unavailing lamentations and despair. Whether men enter early in the morning, or at the eleventh hour, they will spend the subsequent part of their lives in the work of the Lord; and thus evince the sincerity of their repentance, faith, and love; and prove their interest in "the gift of God, which is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."—The exceeding riches of divine grace excite loud murmurs amongst proud pharisees and nominal Christians; for many are called into the visible Church, in comparison with the number of "the remnant according to the election of grace;" and many perform outward services to God, who have never humbly submitted to his righteousness, his sovereignty, and his authority. All their performances are therefore leavened with self-preference: and their objections to the Lord's gracious dealings with publicans and prodigals, their boasts, and their complaining of "the burden and heat of the day," betray the mercenary or the slave, and savour not at all of the spirit of adoption, the loving temper of a child, who keeps his father's commandments, and counts them not grievous. First or last, the mouths of all such objectors will be stopped; and it will be well for them if it be in this world: for the Lord will at the great day of retribution prove to the whole universe the equity of his procedure; and silence all who quarrel with him, for "doing what he will with his own," though they assume that privilege themselves with what he hath intrusted to them. Then it will appear, that many who were first in morality and profession, were in their hearts at enmity with God: whilst the late convert will,

CHAP. XXI.

Jesus enters Jerusalem on an ass's colt, amidst the acclamations of the multitudes, 1—11. He drives the buyers and sellers out of the temple; heals the blind and lame, and answers the objections of the priests 12—16. He causes the barren fig-tree to wither; and shows the disciples the power of faith and prayer, 17—22. He silences those who demand by what authority he acted, 23—27; and exposes the wickedness, and predicts the doom, of the Jews, by the parable of two sons, 28—32, and by that of a vineyard let out to husbandmen, 33—46.

AND^a when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto^b the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,

2 Saying unto them, ^c Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me.

3 And if any man say aught unto you, ye shall say, ^d The Lord hath need of them: ^e and straightway he will send them.

4 All ^f this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet;^g saying,

^a Mark vi. 1. Luke x. 2. 27.
^b Gen. xxi. 20.
^c John xiv. 3.
^d Luke xiv. 7.
^e John vii. 37.
^f Acts i. 12.
^g Ps. xlvii. 18. Mark xi. 2. 2. 4. 17.
16. Luke xix. 30.
32. John ii. 5—8.
^d 1 Chr. xxix. 14.
16. Ps. xlvii. 1.
1. 10. 11. Hag. ii. 8, 9. John ii. 35. xlvii. 2. 4. 2 Cor. xiii. 9.
1 Sam. x. 26. 1 Kings. xvii. 9.
Ezra. i. 15. vii. 27. 2 Cor. viii. 1, 2. 16. Jam. i. 17.
^f 1. 22. xxvi. 56.
John xix. 3. 37.
^g Zech. ix. 9. John xii. 16.

in many instances, be shown to have loved much, and to have been humble and diligent, in proportion to the greatness of his obligations and unworthiness. Let us then remember, that we are all condemned criminals; and that our wise and righteous Sovereign dispenses his unmerited favours as he sees good: let us forego every proud claim, and seek salvation as a free gift: and let us never envy or grudge, but always rejoice and praise God, for every display of his mercy to the vilest of our fellow sinners.

V. 17—23.

A believing view of our once crucified, and now glorified, Redeemer, is the great antidote to a proud self-justifying disposition. When we consider what need there was of the humiliation and sufferings of the Son of God, in order to the salvation of sinners; and when we recollect the willingness, meekness, constancy, and patience, with which the Redeemer endured the insults and cruelty of men and the wrath of God for us; we cannot but feel our self-sufficiency abate, and be sensible of the unspeakable freeness and riches of divine grace in our salvation. Yet with what strange indifference do even disciples sometimes read, hear, or speak, of these interesting topics! Especially when Satan tempts them to aspire after the honour that cometh from man. If we ask such things as are truly good for us or others, God will not refuse our requests: but when we pray under the influence of pride, avarice, or any other passion, we know not what we ask; we mistake poison for food or medicine; and if he loves us, he will withhold from us what we foolishly crave. If we would at last be conformed to our glorified Lord, we must be willing here to have fellowship with him in his sufferings; we must pass through tribulations and reproach; we must drink in some measure of his bitter cup, and experience some degree of his afflictive baptism: yet how light, and mingled with comfort, are our sharpest trials, compared with the unmixed agony and anguish which he endured for us! Possessing a good hope of being admitted to the felicity of heaven, we shall be satisfied with the thought, that it will be “according as it is prepared for us by our heavenly Father.” And even in

this world it becomes us to be earnest about growth in grace, and usefulness in the lowest station in the Church, but not about pre-eminence.

V. 24—34.

Alas, how have ambition and envy moved professed Christians, to indignation against each other, and sown contentions among brethren, in every age! And what enormous mischiefs have arisen from Church-rulers and pastors exercising dominion, after the manner of the kings, nay, tyrants, of the nations; or indeed with more atrocious pride, cruelty, and iniquity! Carnal men thus seek to be the greatest; but those Christians and ministers are in reality the chief and most honourable, and will be deemed so by all competent judges, who stoop the lowest, labour the most diligently, and suffer with most entire meekness and patience, in seeking to do good to their brethren, and to promote the salvation of souls. They most resemble him, “who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many;” and will be most honoured by him to all eternity. Yet so deceitful is the heart, that they, who sincerely avow the determination of leaving all for Christ's sake, and in hope of an eternal and gracious recompense, and who have actually given up many things on these accounts, may yet, like the apostles, have some secret expectation of honour and importance among their brethren; which various circumstances detect, and which should always be watched against. But a humble sense of our own indigence, unworthiness, and misery, and exalted apprehensions of the Saviour's power and grace, are in some respects the standard of human excellency and the source of human felicity. However poor, ignorant, weak, and sinful, that man may be, who thus humbly seeks to Christ for help, he will be earnest in proportion as his applications are discouraged; he will cry the more vehemently, when men would require him to hold his peace; and the Lord will at length attend to him and answer his petitions: he will compassionate his sorrows, open his eyes, supply his wants, and forgive his sins; and thus enable him to join the number of his followers, “to show forth his praises, who hath called him “out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

15 Tell ye ^h the daughter of Sion, Be-
hold, ⁱ thy King cometh unto thee, ^k meek,
and ^l sitting upon an ass, and a colt the
foal of an ass.

6 And the disciples went, ^m and did as
Jesus commanded them;

7 And ⁿ brought the ass and the colt,
and ^o put on them their clothes, and they
set him thereon.

8 And a very great multitude spread
their garments in the way: ^p others cut
branches of trees, and strewed them in the
way.

down branches from the trees, and strewed
them in the way.

9 And the multitudes that went before
and that followed, cried, saying, ^q Hosanna
to the Son of David: ^r blessed is he
that cometh in the name of the Lord;
Hosanna ^s in the highest!

10 And when he was come into Je-
rusalem, ^t all the city was moved, saying,
^u Who is this?

11 And the multitude said, ^v This is
Jesus the prophet ^w of Nazareth of Gal-
ilee.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI. V. 1—5. Several events, especially the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead, intervened before those recorded in this chapter, which occurred only five days before Christ's crucifixion. In his last journey to Jerusalem, our Lord lodged at Bethany, and then proceeded on the road towards the city, to the extremity of that village, or rather to a part of the mount of olives, which lay between it and Bethphage. From thence he sent two of his disciples to the village over against them, perhaps to Bethphage; informing them, that in a certain place which he described, they would find a she-ass, tied, and her colt with her, and ordering them to loose them and bring them to him: and if any man objected, as he foresaw the owners would, they were directed to say, "The Lord hath need of them." The owners might have heard of Jesus under that title; but it undoubtedly implied a high claim of authority over them and theirs. He likewise assured them, that they would find the persons concerned entirely willing to send them away with the ass and her colt, being fully satisfied with their answer. "The other evangelists make mention only of the colt, because our Saviour sat on him alone. Note also here, a wonderful instance of Christ's prescience, in the minutest matters. 1, You shall find a colt; 2, on which no man ever sat; 3, bound with his mother; 4, *in vivo* "a place where "two ways met," Mark xi. 4; 5, as you enter into the village; 6, the owners of which shall at first seem unwilling that you should unbind him; 7, but when they hear "the Lord hath need of him," they will let him go." (*Whitby*.) In the whole of this transaction our Lord had respect to a prophecy concerning the Messiah, (*Note*, Zech. ix. 9.) which described him as *meek and lowly*, and coming to Zion as her King, riding on an ass, *even* on a colt the foal of an ass. The kings of Israel and Judah were forbidden to multiply horses, or to use them in war: for this would lead to carnal confidence: it was therefore a proper characteristic of Zion's King to come riding on an ass, to denote the spiritual nature of his kingdom. Asses were then frequently used to ride on, though not so much as in preceding ages: yet this was an emblem of our Lord's external poverty and humiliation; and an open declaration, that he was Zion's predicted King and Saviour. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 6, 7. The disciples went without hesitation on this service, and found every circumstance accord to what

Christ had foretold them; which could not fail to impress their minds with a deep conviction of his divine knowledge and power, and help to prepare them for that trying scene which was about to open. When, therefore, they had brought the ass and the colt to Jesus, they threw their loose upper garments upon them instead of saddles: and he was pleased to be seated on the *unbroken* colt; and by his miraculous energy to render it tractable and steady, amidst the acclamations of the multitude, which were sufficient to have rendered unruly even an animal that had been accustomed to the road. This seems to have been an emblem of his power, in rendering the hearts of sinners submissive to his will in the midst of the temptations of this world, notwithstanding their natural pride, obstinacy, and carnal affection. *Thereon, or on them*; that is, on the garments; for he rode on the colt only.

V. 8—11. When our Lord's intentions of entering Jerusalem in this humble kind of triumph became known; the multitudes that attended him, (being doubtless increased by continual accessions,) began to spread the way on which he was to pass with their garments, and to strew on each side green branches cut from the trees, or to carry palms in their hands, as was usually done at the feast of tabernacles. Thus they showed their joy, and attempted to honour him, by such methods as were used upon the accession of kings to the throne, or on the triumphal return of victors to their capital cities. It was owing in great measure to the miracle of Lazarus's resurrection, which took place not long before, that the people came thus to meet Christ and welcome him to Jerusalem: and he was pleased to accede to it, both as an open avowal of his character, and in order to accelerate his crucifixion, now that his time was come. The multitudes on this occasion acknowledged him as the Messiah, who was come in the name of JEHOVAH, to assume the kingdom of Israel: and with loud acclamations they cried, Hosanna to the Son of David. "Hosanna" signifies, "Save, I pray," and may be deemed nearly equivalent to "God save the king." They wished prosperity and blessings on him and on his kingdom, with "peace in heaven, and glory in the highest;" either the peculiar favour and friendship of heaven, to render his kingdom glorious above all other kingdoms; or that God might through him be at peace with Israel, and be glorified with the most exalted praises of men and angels. Some of the multitude might use one expression, and some another; but all meaning the same

2. Mat. iii. 1. 2.
3. Mark xi. 1.
4. Luke xix. 45.
5. John ii. 14.
6. Deut. xiv. 24—
26.
7. Lev. i. 14. 7. 7.
8. xi. 6. 8. xiv.
22. 30. xv. 14.
9. Ps. Luke ii. 21.
10. 2. John xi. 25.
11. Ps. xciii. 5. 16.
12. 1. 7.
13. Jer. xii. 17.
14. Luke xix. 46.
15. 2. 3. 1. 4. 5.
16. 1. 1. 2. 3. 4.
17. Acts iii. 1—9.
18. 3. 9.
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12 And Jesus^a went into the temple of God,^a and cast out all them that sold^a and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the^b money-changers, and the seats of them that sold^c doves,

13 And said unto them,^d It is written,^e My house shall be called the house of prayer; but^f ye have made it a den of thieves.

14 And^g the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

15 And^h when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying,ⁱ Hosanna to the Son of David;^j they were sore displeased,

16 And said unto him,^k Hearest thou

what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea;^l have ye never read,^m Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

17 Andⁿ he left them, and went out of the city into^o Bethany, and he lodged there.

18 Now^p in the morning as he returned into the city,^q he hungered.

19 And when he saw^r a fig-tree in the way, he came to it;^s and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it,^t Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig-tree withered away.

20 And when the disciples saw^u it, they marvelled, saying,^v How soon is the fig-tree withered away!

Mat. xii. 3. xix. 4.
Mark xi. 1. 2. 3. 4.
Luke xix. 45.
John ii. 14.
Deut. xiv. 24—26.
Lev. i. 14. 7. 7.
xi. 6. 8. xiv. 22. 30. xv. 14.
Ps. Luke ii. 21.
2. John xi. 25.
Ps. xciii. 5. 16.
1. 7.
Jer. xii. 17.
Luke xix. 46.
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Acts iii. 1—9.
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xxvi. 1. 20. 18.
xxvi. 11. Mark
xi. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
32. 40. 38. 1.
xxii. 2. 68. John
xi. 47—49. 57.
xii. 19.
19. xxii. 42. John
vii. 42.
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
1. Luke xix. 39. 40.
John xi. 47. 48.
Acts iv. 16—18.

for substance; namely, to welcome him as the promised Messiah, and to wish peace and prosperity to his kingdom. (xxiii. 39.) Part of them were true disciples; numbers might be favourably disposed, and act under an immediate impulse; and many might scarcely advert to the meaning of their own words, only joining with the rest, as it is customary on such occasions. No wonder, therefore, that when his disciples and favourers were intimidated, and retired, and persons of another character came to head the multitude, they as loudly cried out, "crucify him, crucify him." They were perhaps disappointed as to their expectations of a temporal kingdom immediately to be set up; and they might be willing to atone with their rulers for their former offence, by joining them against Jesus. For it gave the latter great umbrage to see the city in such commotion, and every body inquiring who this was, and ready to receive Jesus of Nazareth as a prophet, and as their promised Messiah. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 12, 13. It appears from St. Mark, that Jesus went to the temple, and surveyed it, the same day on which he rode into Jerusalem; yet he relates the expulsion of the traders, as if it had occurred on the next day: hence some conclude that he expelled them on two days in succession; the mercenary dealers returning to their occupation as soon as he was departed. (*Note, Mark xi. 15.*) But this is not probable. When, however, Zion's King entered his royal city, he went not to any palace, or senate-house, or court of justice; but to the temple, to show the spiritual nature of his kingdom. There he found some of the precincts, probably the court of the Gentiles, turned into a market for cattle, and such things as were used for sacrifices; and in part occupied by money-changers, who gave the current coin in exchange for that of other countries, for the sake of a premium; or gave money for bills of exchange, or letters of credit, from merchants or bankers, in the several countries whence the people came to worship. We may suppose that the persons concerned exacted on strangers, and thus joined inquiry to profanation: whilst the priests encouraged this vile business, doubtless for a share of the booty! Our Lord, therefore, drove the whole company

from the place, as he had before done at the entrance of his ministry, (*Note, John ii. 13—17*;) a divine energy attending his words and works, which dismayed every mind and prevented all opposition. And when the nature of the property of the money-changers and the sellers of doves caused them to loiter, he overturned their tables and seats, and constrained them to be gone. At the same time, he reminded them of the words which God had spoken by his prophet concerning his temple, (*Notes, Is. lvi. 3—7. Jer. vii. 10, 11*), that it should be rendered a house of prayer and holy worship, not only to the Jews, but to persons of all nations: whereas, instead of allowing the Gentiles a place to worship in, they had converted the court intended for that purpose into a place of merchandise, which was conducted with such fraud and exaction, that it was become a den of thieves; so that dishonest men were sheltered from justice within the precincts of the temple, as robbers are in their caves and forests.

V. 14—16. The blind and lame persons, who frequented the avenues of the temple, to ask alms of those that entered, came around Jesus on this occasion, and he healed them; thus showing the benign nature of his authority, and producing as it were the seal of heaven to what he had done. But the chief priests and scribes, instead of being convinced by his miracles, were the more exasperated; especially when they heard the very children, who had followed him into the temple, crying out, "Hosanna to the Son of David," as the multitudes had done before. They, therefore, in a cavilling manner, inquired whether he heard what they said? To which he answered, in a way which implied that he approved of it as an honour justly due to him: and he asked them, whether they had never read the words of David, declaring, that God perfected his praise, even out of the mouths of babes? (*Notes, Ps. viii. 2.*) Thus he intimated, that, as the Son of God, he had caused honour to be rendered to him by these children, whilst the rulers and priests were endeavouring to disgrace him; and that it was a specimen of that glory which he would receive in all ages, from the humble and despised of the human race.

xxvii. 50. Mark
xi. 22, 23. Luke
xix. 47. 7. John
ix. 12. 20. 1 Cor.
xiii. 2. Jam. i.
8.

John 7. 11. xxvii.
19. Mark xi. 21.
Luke xi. 8-9.
John x. 13.
xx. 7. xxi. 24.
Jam. v. 16. 1.
John iii. 22. v.
14. 15.
2. Mark xiv. 27, 28.
Luke xix. 47.
46. xv. 1. 2.
a. 1 Cor. xxi. 1.
8. c.
Lk. i. 11. Acts
17. 7. vii. 27.

21 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done.

22 And ^a all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive.

23 ¶ And ^a when he was come into the temple, ^a the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, ^b By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?

24 And Jesus answered and said unto

them, ^c I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

25 The ^d baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, ^e Why did ye not then believe him?

26 But if we shall say, Of men; ^f we fear the people: ^g for all hold John as a prophet.

27 And they answered Jesus, and said, ^h We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

8. John ix. 20. 40. 41. Rom. i. 12-22. 29. 2 Cor. ix. 3, 4. 2 Thes. ii. 9. 13.

V. 17—20. (*Marg. Ref.*) It does not appear, that any person in Jerusalem offered to entertain Christ on this occasion; at least, he chose to retire to Bethany from the rage of his enemies and the acclamations of the people. Accordingly he spent the night there, probably at the house of Lazarus and his sisters; and in the morning, for the sake of retirement, and that he might be early at the temple, or that he might not disturb the family, he went away fasting. He was therefore hungry by the way; and seeing a single fig-tree covered with leaves, he went to it, as though he expected fruit from it. But when he found that there were only leaves, he pronounced a solemn malediction upon it, saying, "Let no fruit grow henceforth on thee for ever:" and the next morning the disciples observed, with astonishment, that the fig-tree was entirely dead, and all its verdure withered! This was an emblem of the Jewish nation, which professed to worship the true God, and seemed to promise fruit; but when Christ came he found none: they therefore fell under his wrath, and their profession and privileges withered, nor have they produced any more of the genuine fruits of righteousness from that time to this present day. (*Note, Mark xi. 13.*)

V. 21, 22. When Jesus observed the surprise of the disciples, he again showed them the energy of faith, with a special reference to the power of working miracles in his name. Whenever a proper occasion offered of performing a miracle in support of their doctrine, and they went about it relying on his power, and not doubting of his concurrence, they would not only be enabled to perform as wonderful works, as that of withering the barren fig-tree; but even the mount of Olives, which they were then passing, might at their word be removed and cast into the sea; that is, nothing that they undertook would be impossible for them. (*Marg. Ref.*) To this our Lord subjoined, that they ought not to doubt, but verily to believe, that they should receive whatever they asked in prayer. This, too, specially refers to the case of miracles, but not exclusively. Whenever any person offers suitable petitions, in a right manner, and grounded on God's express promise, he ought not to doubt of his power or willingness to grant them, on

account either of his own unworthiness, or of any difficulty in the way. (*Note, Mark xi. 22—26.*)

V. 23—27. As our Lord now openly appeared in the character of the Messiah, the chief priests and other leading persons of the nation, were exceedingly offended at his teaching and working miracles in the temple; and especially, as he had exposed those abuses, at which they had connived. They deemed themselves the source of ecclesiastical authority, and the rulers of the temple; and therefore they came to him in a body, to demand by what authority he did these things. For they overlooked the divine power of his miracles, which sanctioned all his other actions. The answer of our Lord is a most beautiful model of the meekness of wisdom. He did not directly assert his divine prerogative, or appeal to his miracles, or reproach them with perverseness and hypocrisy: (though he did the latter on other occasions in the character of the heart-searching Judge;) but he left them on this occasion to condemn themselves. He only inquired of them, what they thought of John's ministry and baptism? were they of divine authority, or merely from man? If they fairly answered this plain question, he would then explicitly inform them by what authority he acted. This threw them into the greatest embarrassment: they readily perceived the drift of it, and, reasoning among themselves, observed, that if they allowed John to have acted by divine authority, Jesus would certainly inquire of them, "Why they had not 'believed him?'" This not only referred to his exhortations to repentance, and fruits meet for repentance; but also to his testimony to Christ, as the promised Messiah, the Lamb of God, and the Son of God; and this inference they did not know how to evade. On the other hand, if they treated John's baptism as a mere human device, they feared lest the people should stone them; for they were generally persuaded that John was a prophet, and a very eminent servant of God. Being thus pressed on every hand, they were constrained to confess their ignorance, or uncertainty; and thus to allow that they were incompetent to determine who was, and who was not, sent of God; that is, that they were *blind guides*, who could only mislead those who depended on them. Our Lord, therefore, refused

40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, ^m what will he do unto those husbandmen?

41 They say unto him, ⁿ He will miserably destroy those wicked men, ^o and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

42 Jesus saith unto them, ^p Did ye never read in the Scriptures, ^q The Stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the Head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, ^r and it is marvellous in our eyes?

^p Ps. cxviii. 22-23. ^q Is. xxviii. 16. ^r Zech. iii. 9, 9. ^s Mark xii. 10, 11. ^t Luke xii. 17, 18. ^u Acts i. 18. ^v Rom. ix. 30. ^w Eph. ii. 20. ^x 1 Pet. ii. 4-5. ^y Hab. i. 5. ^z Acts xii. 40, 41. ^{aa} Eph. iii. 2-9.

43 Therefore say I unto you, ^a The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to ^a a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

44 And ^b whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: ^c but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, ^d they perceived that he spake of them.

46 But when ^e they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, ^f because they took him for a prophet.

^a Mt. xii. 11, 12. ^b Mt. xii. 20, 21. ^c John vi. 3, 5. ^d Ex. xix. 6. ^e 1 Pet. ii. 8. ^f Ps. ii. 12. ^g Mt. xii. 15. ^h Zech. xii. 3. ⁱ Luke xii. 10. ^j Mt. xii. 22. ^k 2 Cor. xii. 3. ^l 1 Pet. i. 8. ^m Numb. xiv. 22. ⁿ Ps. ii. 12. ^o Mt. xii. 15. ^p Dan. ii. 34, 35. ^q Mt. xii. 11. ^r Thes. ii. 16. ^s Mark xii. 42. ^t 2 Tim. ii. 7. ^u 1 Cor. xii. 15. ^v 1 John xii. 16. ^w 1 Luke vii. 37. ^x 9. ^y 1 John xii. 15. ^z 1 John xii. 15. ^{aa} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{ab} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{ac} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{ad} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{ae} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{af} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{ag} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{ah} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{ai} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{aj} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{ak} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{al} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{am} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{an} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{ao} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{ap} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{aq} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{ar} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{as} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{at} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{au} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{av} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{aw} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{ax} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{ay} 1 Luke vii. 37. ^{az} 1 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CHAP. XXII.

Jesus speaks the parable of the marriage-supper, and the wedding-garment, 1—14; answers the Pharisees and Herodians about paying tribute to Cæsar, 15—22;

the Sadducees about the resurrection and future state, 23—33; and a lawyer concerning the chief commandment in the law, 34—40; and inquires how the Messiah could be David's Son, and yet his Lord, 41—46.

on foot, to perform his labours of love, or sailed in a fishing boat: surely then his disciples and ministers should be content to weary themselves in his service, and to be poor for his sake; and they should by no means covet, or value, such distinctions and indulgences, as more suit the kingdom of this world, than that of the meek and lowly Jesus. —His servants must unreservedly obey his orders, however opposite to the opinions and fashions of the world, and in so doing he will order every circumstance for their good, and give them continual experience of his foreknowledge, truth, and love. He has every heart in his hand; and he can when he pleases dispose the multitude to favour his cause, and to honour his ministers. But of how little value in general is popular applause! It is the way of the unstable multitude to join the cry of the day, whether it be Hosanna, or Crucify him: and even that popularity, which sometimes attends the preaching of the Gospel, is little to be depended on. Multitudes often hear, and seem to approve, yet few become consistent disciples: the applause conferred is frequently injurious to the preacher: his doctrine serves in numerous instances only to condemn the hearers; and it is well, *in this case*, if he so declare the whole counsel of God, as to stand clear of the blood of those that perish. It is therefore more desirable to be faithful and useful in an obscure situation, than to aspire to notoriety and popularity. But though many seem earnestly to cry "Hosanna to the Son of David," who prove as inconstant as the winds or waves; yet surely the peace and prosperity of his kingdom should be the object of our most ardent wishes and fervent prayers; and we should both labour ourselves, and encourage all, who come in the name of the Lord, to promote his interest in the world: and if we have the mind of Christ, we shall rather resort to the houses of prayer, when we come to populous cities, than to places of diversion, pleasure, or magnificence, or even to the houses of those few in superior stations, who favour his cause.

V. 12—16.

When Zion's king shall come to enlarge his kingdom, he will begin with purging the Church from traders and money-changers. Alas, what numbers of such frequent and engross the *outer courts* of the temple! The worship of God, the administration of sacraments, the most sacred functions and engagements, and the cure of souls, are only valuable or important in their judgment, as far as preferment or wealth can be got by them. If Christ should come into many parts of the visible Church, how many recesses of iniquity and avarice would he discover and cleanse! And how many things, that are daily practised under the guise of religion, would he show to be more suitable for a den of thieves, than for the house of prayer! Ingenious and interested men may plead in favour of these abuses, and rulers may connive at them: but it will at length

appear, that the mercenary spirit of such ecclesiastics has been one grand cause of the spread of infidelity, one principal hinderance to the progress of the Gospel, and one powerful engine of the devil, for hardening the hearts and murdering the souls of men: so that in fact such brokers and traders in the temple have far more to answer for than other depredators; who only plunder men's property, but do little injury to their immortal souls. May the Lord then come and drive them out of the Church; and may he stir up the spirit of such as have influence and authority, to check the progress of these sacrilegious profanations. It is indeed to be feared, that buying and selling, in every way, are often connected with great dishonesty: yet certainly no merchandizing is so iniquitous as that which is conducted within the precincts of the sanctuary. No wisdom, holiness, beneficence, or kindness to the poor and afflicted, can silence the clamours of interested men, against such persons as endeavour to put a stop to their iniquitous lucre: nor can we wonder at this, when we recollect, that even the miracles and holiness of the Son of God could procure him no exemption; but on the contrary drew upon him the more desperate enmity. They who hate his Gospel, because it interferes with their interests, reputation, or authority, will be greatly displeased with such as show favour to it: and the Lord hath often perfected his praise out of the mouths of mere children, in age, abilities, learning, or estate, when chief priests and learned scribes have contradicted and blasphemed.

V. 17—22.

It is best to shun needless altercations with malicious opposers, and all appearances of ostentation; and the genuine followers of Christ will cheerfully submit to the pinchings of poverty, or the cravings of hunger, rather than be deprived of opportunities of usefulness; though their zeal and love will not prevent them from feeling the inconvenience as sensibly as other men. But let us be peculiarly afraid of the doom denounced on the barren fig-tree! The leaves of profession may impose on men: but the Lord will shortly come, and seek for fruit; and if to the last he finds none, the tree will fall under his curse of everlasting unfruitfulness: and how tremendous the sentence of being left to eternal unholiness and enmity against God! to be eternally contrary to him, and the objects of his holy abhorrence and indignation! Such considerations should excite us to more fervent prayer; and lead us to offer all our petitions, in an unwavering reliance on God's promises, and on the merits of our great Advocate; fully expecting that he will grant our requests, in every thing really good for us. In this way no impediments need discourage us: for we may surmount or remove them all by the power of faith and prayer. Thus we may go on with our Master's work, without regarding the objections

7 But when the king heard *thereof*,
 " he was wroth: and he sent forth " his
 armies, and destroyed those murderers,
 and burned up their city.

8 Then saith he to his servants, " The
 wedding is ready, " but they which were
 bidden were not worthy.

9 Go " ye therefore into the highways,
 and, as many as ye shall find, bid to the
 marriage.

10 So those servants went out into the
 highways, and gathered together all as
 many as they found, " both bad and
 good: " and the wedding was furnished
 with guests.

11 And " when the king came in to
 see the guests, he saw there a man " which
 had not on a wedding-garment:

12 And he saith unto him, " Friend,
 " how camest thou in hither, not having
 a wedding-garment? " And he was speech-
 less.

13 Then said the king to his servants,
 " Bind him hand and foot, and take him
 away, and cast him into " outer darkness;
 " there shall be weeping and gnashing of
 teeth.

14 For " many are called, but few are
 chosen.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII. V. 1—10. (*Notes, Luke xiv. 15—24.*)

Our Lord, proceeding to show the priests and people the criminality and consequences of their unbelief, stated the case to them in another parable; or in *parables*, for two are connected together. The kingdom of God might in this respect be compared to a king, who made a marriage-feast for his son. The preceding parable represented the sufferings of Christ, and the guilt and punishment of those who put him to death: but this shows the *motive* of his humiliation, and the *effects* of it to himself, to his people, and to unbelievers and hypocrites. The union of the Son of God with man by assuming human nature; the endeared relation into which he receives his redeemed Church, and every true member of it; the spiritual honours, riches, and blessings, to which they are advanced by this sacred relation; the comforts they receive from his condescending and faithful love, and from communion with him; and the reciprocal duties of their relation to him: are all intimated by this metaphor. The abundant and rich provision, which the Lord hath made for our perishing souls in the Gospel, is represented by a royal feast, made on so important an occasion as the marriage of the king's son. John Baptist, the apostles, and seventy disciples, who first announced the arrival of the promised Messiah, were the servants, that went to call to the feast those who had been bidden long before, even the Jews, who expected the coming of the Messiah, to save and bless them: yet they would not come to him when he appeared, being prejudiced against his holy doctrine and lowly character. The other servants, sent with the second invitation, when all things were ready, seem to mean the apostles and preachers of the Gospel after Christ's ascension into heaven; who showed to the Jews, *first*, the nature of the Gospel, and the preparation made for it. But the persons thus favoured having no value for the king or his son, or desire for the feast, or gratitude for the special honour shown them, treated these urgent and repeated invitations with supercilious contempt; making light of them, and going to their different employments and interests. And as the servants may be supposed to have remonstrated with the remnant, on the impropriety and criminality of their conduct, they were enraged, and showed their enmity

against the king, by abusing, wounding, or killing them. This represents the final rejection of Christ and the Gospel by the Jewish nation; and " the contempt and cruelty with which they treated the apostles and other ministers of Christ, with the vile motives and extreme wickedness of their conduct. When the king heard this, he resolved to send them no more invitations; but in due time he made war upon them, destroyed the murderers, and burned their city: thus the Lord sent the Roman armies to execute vengeance on the Jewish nation, and to desolate Jerusalem, for their obstinate contempt of his Gospel, and the cruelties exercised towards the ministers of Christ, which completed their guilt in crucifying him. As, however, the persons first invited would not come, and proved themselves unworthy of the favour shown them, the king determined to find other guests to partake of his royal banquet: he therefore sent his servants into the public roads, ordering them to invite all that they met with, of every rank, description, and character. Accordingly they collected together a sufficient number, to furnish the wedding with guests. This represented the successful preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and their admission to all the privileges of the Lord's people. (*Marg. Ref.*) "Not all the whole 'company of them, that are called by the voice of the 'Gospel, are the true Church of God: for the most part 'of them had rather follow the commodities of this life; 'and some do most cruelly persecute those that call them. 'But they are the true Church, who obey when they are 'called; such as for the most part they are, whom the 'world despiseth.'

V. 11—14. The preceding part of the parable represented the replenishing of the Church with professed Christians: this shows the difference between nominal and real disciples. According to the customs of those times, when princes had large wardrobes, from which on some occasions they furnished numbers with suitable apparel, it must be supposed that wedding-garments were offered to each guest, when they entered the banqueting house: for it could not be expected, that travellers were properly habited for the royal entertainment, to which they were so unexpectedly invited. One man, however, either proud of his own apparel, or despising the feast, obtained admission without the wedding-garment, and continued unnoticed till the

15 ¶ Then ^a went the Pharisees, and took counsel ^b how they might entangle him in his talk.

16 And they sent out unto him their disciples with ^b the Herodians, saying, 'Master, ^a we know that thou art ¹ true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.

17 Tell us therefore, ^a What thinkest thou? ^o Is it lawful to give tribute unto ^c Caesar, or not?

18 But Jesus ^a perceived their wickedness, and said, 'Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?

19 Shew me the tribute-money. And they brought unto him ^a a penny.

20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and ^a superscription?

21 They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's;

and unto God the things that are God's.

22 When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

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king came in to see his guests: when, being questioned how he came there, he was speechless, (which he could not have been, had not a garment been offered him;) and he was therefore ordered to be excluded and punished, as a despiser of the king and the royal banquet, by being thrown, bound hand and foot, into some dark dungeon without the palace; where weeping and extreme vexation would be his portion, whilst the guests were enjoying the feast. This denotes, that some who are not true believers, appear willing and welcome guests at the Gospel-feast, and intrude into its most sacred ordinances. It is not material, whether we understand the wedding-garment to mean the imputed righteousness of Christ, or the sanctification of the Spirit: for both are alike necessary, and they always go together. No man can obtain either of these blessings, except from Christ: yet they who remain unrighteous and unholily, besides all their other crimes, are chargeable with refusing the blessing when offered them. Such persons often impose on ministers and Christians: but when the King shall come to scrutinize the whole multitude of his guests, he will detect their hypocrisy, silence their excuses, and expose their wickedness. The appellation, *Friend*, seems to allude to the man's profession, and contains a tacit reproof of his inconsistent character. (*Marg. Ref.*) The *outer darkness*, &c. plainly enough describes the future portion of all hypocrites, as well as open unbelievers. This parable our Lord closed, as he had done one before, by observing, that many were called or invited by the Gospel, who were not chosen and approved as true disciples. (*Note xx. 16.*)—'Think not that all who are outwardly called by the sweet invitations of the Gospel are made partakers of grace and salvation. God calleth all sorts of men, and men of all sorts; and they do outwardly answer this voice of God: but his inward and effectual calling, and the election of grace, is but of few.' (*Ep. Ha4.*)—'In the small number which come at the calling, there are some cast-aways, which do not confirm their faith by newness of life.' (*Beza.*) 'The called are many, but the elect few.' (*Hammond.*)

V. 15—22. (*Marg. Ref.*) This question was proposed to our Lord, in consequence of a plan formed by the chief priests and rulers to compass his death. The persons sent on this occasion were Pharisees and Herodians. They held contrary opinions, in the controverted

point of paying tribute to the Roman emperor. The Pharisees inferred from the law, which forbade them to place a stranger over them as their king; that it was unlawful to obey or pay tribute to the Romans, though forcibly reduced to subjection under them; and this suited the refractory spirit and the pride of the people, and was the more popular opinion. (*Marg. Ref.*) But the Herodians, who were strongly tainted with Sadducean infidelity and avowedly attached to Herod's family, made their religion subservient to their politics, and endeavoured to accommodate it to the humours and interests of their prince: and as he was supported by the Romans, so they argued that tribute might lawfully be paid to them. These contending parties combined to entangle our Lord in his discourse; and finding that he was open and communicative, they addressed him as a teacher of righteousness, whose knowledge, faithfulness, and disinterested intrepidity impartiality, they highly venerated. After this insidious exordium, they desired him to inform them, whether he thought it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar, or not? For they were disposed to settle that controversy by his judgment. It seems, that they thought it impossible for him so to answer, as to escape the snare. Had he simply directed them to pay tribute; they would have represented him, not only as an enemy to their liberties, but also, as deciding in opposition to the law of Moses, and requiring unreserved obedience to idolaters. On the other hand, had he declared it unlawful to pay tribute to Caesar; they would have accused him before the Roman governor, and have delivered him up into his hands to be punished for sedition or rebellion. (*Marg. Ref.*) But Jesus gave them to understand that he was fully aware of their insidious designs; yet, he chose to answer the question, because he intended to grift on it most important instruction. Having therefore obtained the coin in which the tribute was paid, and drawn them to acknowledge that it was stamped with Caesar's image and name; he tacitly inferred that Caesar was the civil ruler to whom God had subjected them: and therefore, as they derived protection and the benefits of magistracy from him, (of which the currency of his coinage was an evidence,) they were not only allowed, but required, to render to him both tribute and civil honour and obedience. At the same time, they must render to God, that honour, worship, love and service, which his com-

7. Mark xli. 18.
8. Luke xx.
27. 8c.
a. iii. 7 xvi. 6
Acts i. 1. 17.
xviii. 6-9
a. i. Cor. xv. 12-
14 2 Tim. ii. 18.
b. 16. 28. vii. 21
Luke vi. 46.
c. Gen. xxxviii. 8
11. Deut. xxv.
9-10 Ruth 1
11. Mark xii. 10.
Luke xx. 26
d. Mark xli. 20-
21. Luke xx.
29-33. Heb. ix.
27.

* Gen. 22:19.

23 ¶ The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him,

24 Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

25 Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother:

26 Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh.

27 And last of all the woman died also.

28 Therefore in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.

30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,

32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

33 And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine.

34 ¶ But when the Pharisees had

* Job xii. 25-27.
Ps. xvi. 9-11.
xviii. 15 xli. 14.
15. Ps. 113. 29-36.
Is. xlv. 2 xxi. 19.
19. 19. 19. 19.
Dan. xii. 2. 3.
Hos. xiii. 14.
Lu. c. xxiv. 44-
47. John x. 9.
Rem. vi. 4.
1. Gen. xlviii. 11.
Jer. xxxiii. 17.
Luke 1. 37. Acts
xxvi. 6. Phil. iii.
21.
e. Mark xli. 24. 25.
Luke x. 34.
-16. John v. 29.
29. 1. Cor. vi. 29
-31. 1. John ii.
1. 2.
h. xlii. 43. Ps. ciii.
20. Zech. iii. 7.
Rev. v. 9-14.
xix. 10.
1. ix. 3. xii. 3. 7.
xxi. 16. 42.
-24. iii. 6. 16.
Acts. vii. 32.
Heb. xi. 18.
Mark xli. 26. 27.
Luke x. 37. 39.
Mark xli. 28.

m. 22. vii. 26, 29. Mark vi. 2. Luke ii. 47. iv. 22. xx. 39, 40. John vii. 46. — Mark xli. 28

mandments claimed, and which were justly due to him, and not to disobey him out of regard to any earthly sovereign. This answer condemned equally the refractory spirit of the Pharisees, who scrupled civil obedience to the Roman emperors under pretence of religion, and the time-serving Herodians, who made a compliment of their religion to their prince, and conformed to many heathen customs, to please him: and it is moreover of universal application, and replete with practical instruction. The conviction conveyed by this most wise, conclusive, and beautiful answer to so delicate a question, astonished, confounded, and disappointed the spies, and they went away, unable to take any advantage of his words. 'Christians must obey their magistrates, although they be wicked and extortioners; but so that the authority of God may remain safe to him, and his honour be not diminished.' (Beza.)

V. 23—33. (Marg. Ref. Note, Deut. xxv. 5—10.) The ministry of Christ was as displeasing to the Sadducees, as to the Pharisees and Herodians. The former denied a future resurrection, as well as the immortality of the soul: yet they allowed the divine authority of the books of Moses, and some parts of Scripture. They knew, however, that Jesus taught a contrary doctrine; and they purposed to embarrass him with a difficulty, which probably had perplexed some other opponents: though the case stated would not have been worth recording, had it not shown the cavilling frivolous spirit of infidelity, and given our Lord an occasion of returning a most instructive answer. The whole of the difficulty lay in determining to whom the woman would belong in the future world, as seven brothers had married her, and she had borne no children to any of them: but the inference that they meant to insinuate from it was no less, than the impossibility of a resurrection. This method of arguing by insinuation from imagined difficulties against authenticated revelation, or even stubborn facts, forms a species of logic for which infidels, ancient and modern, have a peculiar predilection: and indeed it is the best method that can be taken of perplexing weak minds, and amusing superficial inquirers. Our Lord, therefore, first declared, that they greatly erred,

because they understood not the Scriptures, nor the power of God, to raise the dead incorruptible, and fitted for a far different life from this.* Among other egregious errors, the Sadducees took no notice of a state of punishment in the future world; but spake as if they, who believed the resurrection, thought all men, (at least all Jews,) to be of one character, and to go to one place. But our Lord further informed them, that marriage was only intended for this present world, to replenish the earth, and to repair the ravages that death continually makes among its inhabitants: but that in the future state, as there would be no death, so no marriage, for all the righteous would be made like unto the angels, as the children of God, as well as the children of the resurrection. There the very body will be made spiritual, and all the employments and pleasures will be pure, intellectual, and angelic. Having refuted this cavil, our Lord next proceeded to establish the truth of the doctrine opposed, from that part of the Scripture which they professed to believe: he therefore referred them to the words of God to Moses, when he spake to him from the burning bush. The Patriarchs had been dead a considerable time before this; yet the Lord there declared himself to be *their* God: but he is not the God of the dead who have sunk into non-existence, but of the living who are capable of enjoying his favour. This argument seems at first sight more immediately to prove, that the souls of the Patriarchs were in existence and feicity, than to evince the resurrection of their bodies: but if we consider, that man is constituted of soul and body, we shall perceive that it proves both; for if *JEHOVAH* gave himself by an everlasting covenant to be the God and Portion of any person, it implied that he would finally render him happy in body and soul, by bringing him to the complete enjoyment of his presence and favour; and this could not be done, unless the body was restored from the grave. The whole reasoning shows, that the doctrine of the resurrection, and the future state, is as certainly contained in the Old Testament, when properly understood, as in the New. The resurrection of the wicked is revealed in other places, but the question proposed led Jesus rather to speak concerning that of the righteous,

y 154 Mark xii.
25 Luke xx. 41.
xi 4-6 b. xv. 33.
xvi 11-17 John
i. 49. vi. 6. 69.
22 Phil. ii.
9 11 Phil. ii.
Col. iii. 11. i.
Pet. ii. 4-7.
Rev. v. 12. 14.
a. i. xxi. 9.
13. 13. 13. 13.
xvi 1-4 Jer.
xxiii 5. 6. Ez.
xxiv. 23. 24.
Am. ix. 17. Luke
i. 65. 70. John
xii 12-22 Acts
xii 22. 23.
b 2 Sam. xxv.
Mark xiii. 36.
Luke vi. 26. 27.
Act. i. 16. 18.
31 Heb.
2 Pet. i. 12. Rev.
iv 2.
c Ps. c. i. Acts
ii. 34. i. Cor. xv.
25 Heb. i. 13.
d John x. 28. i.
1 Cor. i. 2. Phil.
-6. Luke xv. 27.
4. 4. 4. 4. Phil. ii.
xii. 34. Luke x.

V. 41—46. (*Marg. Ref.*) When Christ had baffled the insidious devices of his enemies, and exposed their ignorance, hypocrisy, and malice, he was pleased to propose a question to them, as they were gathered around him. He inquired, therefore, what thoughts they had of their promised Messiah? Whose Son did they suppose him to be? And when they answered, that he would be the Son of David, he asked them, Why David, speaking by the Spirit of God, had called the Messiah Lord, or Governor, seeing he was to be his remote descendant? (*Ps.* cx. 1.) If he had been a mere man, who was to have no existence till many ages after David's death, with what propriety could his progenitor call him his Lord? For he could not possibly owe him any subjection. This question, which is equally interesting to modern Socinians, the Pharisees could not answer; and they were so baffled in their endeavours to entangle Jesus, that they never after dared to put another question to him. Nor can any man solve the difficulty proposed in a satisfactory manner, except he allow

CHAP. XXIII.

Jesus exhorts the people to regard the scriptural instructions of the Scribes and Pharisees; but not to follow their bad examples, and especially not to imitate their am-

bition, 1—12. He denounces divers woes on them for their blindness, hypocrisy, and iniquity. 13—33. He predicts the destruction of Jerusalem, and the calamities of the Jews for their atrocious crimes, 34—39.

the Messiah to be truly and properly the Son of God; and, equally with the Father, David's Lord and the Lord of all, at the time when his progenitor thus spake of him; and that at the appointed season he assumed our nature into personal union with the Deity, and so became "God manifested in the flesh," and in this sense the Son of man and the Son of David. To this the Old Testament had given abundant testimony: but the Pharisees, blinded by carnal prejudices, overlooked all that had been said of Immanuel, and of the mighty God becoming a Child born, and expected a mere man and a temporal deliverer, instead of a divine and spiritual Redeemer. 'Our Lord always takes it for granted, that the writers of the Old Testament were under such an extraordinary guidance of the Holy Spirit, as to express themselves with the strictest propriety on all occasions.' (Doddridge.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—14.

Our merciful God hath not only provided food, but a royal feast, for the perishing souls of his rebellious creatures: and there is enough and to spare of every thing, that can conduce to our present comfort and everlasting felicity, in the salvation of his Son Jesus Christ. Let none then think of religion as an unpleasant service, to which they are urged; but as a rich and magnificent feast, to which they are invited: and, whilst believers enjoy peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, communion with God, and the lively hope of glory, let them not forget at what a price the feast was provided. All things are now ready; the servants are continually employed in inviting guests; and their commission reaches, not only to the utmost limits of the visible Church, but to the highways of the Gentile world. They are commanded to invite all, as many as they find, both bad and good; to renew their invitations to such as have repeatedly rejected them; and not to be wearied out by disappointments or ill usage, but to apply to others, and to others still, that the wedding may be furnished with guests. Yet after all these invitations numbers perish in their sins: not because they *may not come*, nor, properly speaking, because they *cannot*, but because they *will not*. This is the effect of profane contempt of spiritual blessings, inordinate love of worldly objects, carnal dislike to the divine character and government, and proud aversion to the humbling salvation of the Gospel. From such motives, numbers make light of the invitations, and carelessly and ungratefully turn aside to their worldly employments, diversions, and studies; perhaps pretending want of leisure, or purposing to come at a more convenient season. Others are enraged at the warnings and expostulations, with which the servants enforce the invitation; and treat them with insult and reproach, or even murder them, if they can get them into

their hands. Thus the Gospel of salvation occasions their deeper condemnation, because they hate the light through love of sin: and so God is provoked to give them up to temporal and eternal destruction. Some times they, who have been brought up under the Gospel, prove the greatest despisers and enemies of it: and the servants that are sent forth into the high-ways and hedges, have most success in winning souls to Christ. No objections will be made to any man, on account of his previous character, who is desirous of admission to this feast; yet no man will actually partake of it, who hath not the wedding-garment prepared for lost sinners, who does not apply for an interest in the merits of Christ, or who remains a stranger to converting grace. Many find admission among believers, and continue with them to the last, who have not this wedding-garment, and whom the King will at length distinguish, and separate from his chosen people: then their present pretences will be shown to be fallacious, and they will have nothing to plead in arrest of judgment, when he shall order them to be bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. As therefore many are called, and few chosen, let us examine ourselves whether we be in the faith, and seek to be approved of by the King himself, when he shall come in to see the guests.

V. 15—22.

Whilst we carefully shun the hypocrisy and wickedness of the enemies of Christ, we may learn from their words what a minister of God ought to be. By their allowance, he should be an upright faithful man, teaching the way of God in truth; able and bold to declare the whole counsel of the Lord; and not so caring for, fearing, or respecting the person of any man, as to keep back, alter, or soften any part of his message. Now who will deny, in words, that this ought to be the character of a minister? Yet who almost reduces it to practice? Who expects such unpliant faithfulness and unreserved honesty towards all ranks and descriptions of men, from the ministers of Christ? Who does not censure that man, as rude, uncourtly, and intruding, who flatters no one, connives at no errors or sins of his patron, his friend, or his prince: and will not disguise his sentiments, to please any party, or for fear of the frown of any man? The nearer any servant of God comes to this character, the more need he will have to pray for the meekness of wisdom, and to copy the example of his Lord: for many will seek for matter of accusation against him, that they may re-establish their reputation by ruining his; and if his boldness be not evidently disinterested, benevolent, humble, harmless, and prudent, he will often be entangled in their snares. Few subjects are more perilous in this respect, than those which are in any degree connected with political contests: for it is difficult to touch

a. xv. 10, Rec.
Mark vii. 14.
Luke xii. 1. 57.
xx. 45.
b. Neh. vii. 4-8.
Matt. 17. Mark
xii. 50. Luke
xx. 45.
c. xv. 2-9. Fx
xviii. 19, 20. 23.
Deut. iv. 5. v.
27. xviii. 9-12.
2 Chr. xxx. 12. Acts v. 24. Rom. xii. 1.

THEN spake Jesus ^a to the multitude,
and to his disciples,

2 Saying, ^b The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:

3 All therefore ^c whatsoever they bid
you observe, *that* observe and do: but

do not ye after their words: ^d for they
say, and ye not.

4 For ^e they bind heavy burdens, and
grievous to be borne, and lay *them* on
men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will
not move them with one of their fingers.

d. xxi. 29. Ps. 1.
16-20. Rom. 1.
19-24. 2 Tim.
iii. 16. 1. 6.
e. 23. xi. 28-32.
Luke x. 46.
Acts xv. 10. 28.
Gal. ii. 13.
Rev. ii. 24, 25.

on them without giving advantage to one party or other, or without verging to some extreme. Yet ministers must teach the people *their duty*; though it should interfere with their own popularity, or incur the displeasure of their rulers; and with this they should bound their interposition. They must insist upon men's rendering tribute, honour, and civil obedience, without reserve, to the powers that be; let Pharisees, of whatever name, attempt as they please to render religion the watch-word of sedition, or the cloak of their depredations on the public revenue; or indulge their rebellion against the providence of God, by reviling the persons or measures of their rulers: and they must equally insist upon men's rendering to God the things that are God's, let Herodians say what they will to prove, that kings are authorized to lord it over the consciences of their subjects, and to model the Gospel and its ordinances as may best suit their interest, convenience, or caprice. Nor will it be very difficult to apply this general rule to particular cases; provided the heart be upright: except that it will sometimes expose a man to secular loss or persecution, if he determines to obey Cæsar as far as, and no further than, his duty to God will give him leave. But how broad is the rule of God's commandments! The enlightened soul can never seriously meditate on any one of them, without seeing cause to say, "God, be merciful to me, and write *this* law in my heart, I beseech thee."

V. 23—33.

They who are most proud of their reasoning powers, often form the grossest conceptions of spiritual things: they speak of God, as if he were altogether such an one as themselves, and of heaven with carnal ideas and imaginations; so that they are commonly fighting with shadows, when they start objections to the doctrines of the Gospel. If they understood the plain meaning of the Scriptures, or had any proper ideas of the divine power, they must be convinced of the futility of their own arguments; which seldom need any other answer, than a fair statement of the truths which they oppose. Indeed, all our errors result from our "not knowing the scriptures, and the power of God:" and this should excite us to redouble our diligence in searching the sacred oracles, and in prayer to be led into a right understanding of them. We are continually reminded what a dying world this is. The history of men in general resembles the account here given of one family: death removes one after another, and so terminates all their carnal hopes, joys, cares, sorrows, and connexions. How wretched then must they be, who have all their good things here, and can expect nothing but misery beyond the grave! And how grovelling the soul of an infidel, who can be content, and even hope, to die like a beast, for the sake of living without God in the world! Yet even of his forlorn hope, he will most certainly be disappointed. The

whole Scripture warns us to flee from the wrath to come, and calls us to expect a far better and happier state; and the thoughts of that felicity will be the more welcome to the spiritual man, (however comfortable in his relative connexions,) by the consideration, that there will be neither marrying nor giving in marriage. For he aspires at a higher state of existence, and emulates the worship, the holiness, and blessedness of angels; compared with which the most rational and honourable of earthly comforts are mean and of no estimation. In that happy world the God of Abraham will be the Portion of all his believing children; and they will, in body and soul, live to and with him, and have the unalloyed fruition of that "fulness of *joy* which is at his right hand for evermore."

V. 34—46.

Whilst Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes, are perplexing each other, and trying to disconcert us, by curious questions and frivolous disputes, let us remember that the love of God with all our heart, and the love of our neighbours as ourselves, though the ministration of condemnation to the sinner, is our perfect rule of obedience; and that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every *one that believeth*." It behooves us sinners, therefore, above all things, to inquire seriously, what we think of Christ? What are our views of his person, his priesthood, his atonement, his intercession, his power, truth, and love? Is he altogether glorious in our eyes, and precious to our hearts. Do we trust in him as the incarnate Son of God, and submit to him as the anointed King of Israel? Do we apply to him in all his characters and offices? Do we desire that all his enemies should be put under his feet, without excepting any of our own sinful passions! Do we deem him entitled to all the service and honour which we can possibly render him, and far more? According to a man's practical judgment in these matters, will his state, character, and conduct be. His judgment of the perfections, law, and government of God; of sin and holiness; of this world and the next; of himself, his life past, and present, and of his heart; and in short of every object around him; will be influenced by his view of this subject. The temper of his mind will be humble, meek, patient, compassionate, thankful, spiritual, or the contrary, according to his thoughts of Christ; and his whole conduct will be habitually influenced by it. May Christ then be our Joy, our Confidence, our All: may we daily see more of his glory and preciousness, and experience more of his love; and may we daily be more conformed to his image, and devoted to his service. Then our words and works will confute and shame those who would falsely accuse us, and effectually silence the malicious objections and subtle insinuations of Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians, however distinguished.

1 Cor. 1, 2, 5, 16, 2
 1 Kings 8, 16
 Luke xvi 15 x
 47, xvi 15 John
 7, 41, xii 15, xii
 43 Phil 1, 15, ii
 3, 2 Thes ii, 4
 2 Deut. vi, 8
 Prov. iii, 3, vi
 21-21
 18, xv Num xv
 35, 29 Deut
 xxi, 12
 1, xx 21 Prov.
 xxv, 6, 7 Mark
 xii, 16, 29 Luke
 xi, 43, xiv 7-11 xx 46, 47 Rom xii, 10 Jam. ii, 1-4 3 John 9. — k John 1, 38
 42 iii 2, 26, vi 25 xx 16.

5 But 'all their works they do for to be seen of men: 'they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge 'the borders of their garments,

6 And 'love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, ' Rabbi, Rabbi.

8 But 'be not ye called Rabbi; for 'one is your Master, even Christ; and 'all ye are brethren.

9 And 'call no man your father upon the earth: 'for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.

22 Acts xxi, 1, 1 Cor iv 7, 1 Tim. v 1, 2, Heb xii, 9. — p vi, 8, 9, 32, Mat 1, 2, Rom. viii 14-17, 2 Cor. vi 18, 1 John iii, 1.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII. V. 1-4. Our Lord seems to have continued still in the temple; and to have addressed himself to the disciples and the multitude, in the presence of the Scribes and Pharisees. These were the stated teachers and rulers of the nation: in these respects they sat in Moses' seat; for they explained the law of Moses to the people, and enforced obedience to it. Whatever therefore from this source they inculcated, the people ought to attend to and practise. This limitation must be admitted; otherwise their traditions and perversions of the law, and even their opposition to Christ, would have been included; for they taught these to the people. But he evidently meant, that whatever they enforced or required, according to the law of Moses, or the writings of the prophets, was to be obeyed. 'All that they require from the books of Moses, 'or the law of God, (*Theophylact*;) which interpretation 'must be allowed of. Because Christ elsewhere requires 'his disciples to 'beware of the leaven,' that is, the doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees;—because they 'taught for doctrines the commandments of men,' and 'by their traditions made void the law of God;' and were 'blind leaders of the blind.' (*Whitby*.) No argument can fairly be formed on this, to prove that men are obliged to follow the instructions or obey the commands of any teachers or rulers, further than they consist with the word of God; yet, on the other hand, their bad characters should not induce men to disobey their lawful commands, or to reject their Scriptural instructions. But, corrupt as the doctrine of the Scribes was, their works were still worse: and therefore the people were in no respect to imitate them, as they did not even practise their own injunctions. Indeed, by enforcing, under severe penalties, great exactness in ceremonial observances, and in their traditional restrictions and austerities, as well as in moral duties, they bound up very heavy burdens to lay on the shoulders of the people: but they found out methods of dispensing with whatever was uneasy to themselves, or compounding for it; so that they would not put a finger to assist in moving the load, which they imposed on others.

V. 5-7. Our Lord further warned the people to be upon their guard against the doctrine and spirit of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were ostentatious hypocrites in all their duties. The Jews understood the words of Moses in a literal sense, (*Deut. vi. 7-9*.) and therefore used to have scraps of parchment, inscribed with texts out of the law, fastened to their foreheads or wrists: these were called *phylacteries*, or *preservative*s, being superstitiously considered as amulets, to protect them from dangers; and the Pharisees, in ostentation of their extraordinary devo-

tion, wore their phylacteries remarkably broad. For the same reason, they enlarged the *fringes* which they were commanded to wear upon their garments. (*Marg. Ref.*) In the same self-exalting spirit they delighted to intrude into the chief seats, when they went to a feast; or to be placed in a conspicuous situation, as very honourable persons, even when they went to the synagogue, professedly to abase themselves in the worship of God. It was also very pleasing to them, to be addressed with great respect, in the places of public resort, as men of eminent wisdom and piety, under the appellation of Rabbi; a word importing the variety of their learning and the greatness of their religious knowledge. 'What great holiness they placed 'in these phylacteries, we may learn from the Targum on 'Cant. viii. 3, which introduceth the Jew speaking thus: 'I am chosen above all people, because I bind my frontals to my head and my left hand; and my parchment is 'fixed on the right side of my gate, so that a third part 'of it comes up to my bed, that the evil spirits may not 'hurt me.' (*Whitby*.) 'These rolls of parchment were 'by them prepared with a great multitude of ceremonies; and decrees were made by them, of the creatures of 'whose skins that parchment ought to be made, and of the 'knives with which it was to be cut, and a great deal 'more. Being made, they applied them to the foreheads 'and to the wrists; the special use of them was in their 'prayers.' (*Hammond*.) *Synagogues*. 'There showing 'their pride, where they ought to have taught others humility.' (*Theophylact*.) *Rabbi*. 'The word signifies 'one that is above his fellows, and is as good as a number 'of them; and we may see by the repeating of it, how 'proud a title it was.' (*Beza*.)

V. 8-10. This instruction seems to have been immediately addressed to the disciples, who were warned to shun all approaches to such ostentation or desire of human applause, as disgraced the scribes. Even the apostles, though the most eminent persons that ever appeared on earth, were commanded not to accept of the title of Rabbi; because they had one Master, even Christ himself, and they were all brethren, without any pre-eminence or authority over each other; being all equally dependent on and subject to their common Lord. This is twice repeated, perhaps to show how prone men are to forget it. And as they were not to affect lordly authority or worldly honour, they were required not to call any man 'their father upon 'earth.' This cannot be supposed to forbid men from expressing respect, affection, and gratitude, to those, who have been instrumental to their spiritual good; any more than to interfere with the duties of children to their parents. (1 Cor. iv. 14-16.) But Christians are forbidden to look

q. xx. 26-27 Mark
3: 45, 41 Luke
x. 25-27 John
xiii. 14, 5 Cor.
ix. 16, 2 Cor. iv.
6, 9, 23 Gal. vi.
13, 24 1, 4, 5-6
1, v. 3, xxiii.
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

13 ¶ But woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

— Luke xi. 52. 1 Luke xi. 52. John vi. 45-52. 15, 22, 24, 31. Acts iv. 17, 18. v. 23, 40. 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16. 2 Tim. iii. 8, v. 15.

14 Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

15 Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves.

q. xxiii. 22-24. John xiii. 29. Mark xiii. 40. Luke xx. 47. 2 Tim. i. 6. Tit. i. 10, 11. 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2. 1, 3, 4. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

up to any man, as having dominion over their faith, as entitled to implicit credence and submission; or as the head of a sect, whose decisions are stamped with authority over men's consciences: nay, they ought to oppose all claims and pretensions of this kind, by whomsoever they are advanced, or on whatever grounds. If these rules were proper for the apostles and primitive disciples, they must be still more suitable to the case of all other teachers and Christians: and it is evident, that they were given with a prophetic view to the enormous abuses and fatal effects that have since been witnessed in the Christian Church, from the ambition and lust of dominion in some, and the abject subjection of others to their assumed authority and pretensions to infallibility. The astonishing degree to which these evils have proceeded, especially in the Church of Rome; the exorbitant claims, and high sounding titles of ecclesiastics, and servile submission of the people, are well known: but the same heaven still works; and many things are found, among different bodies of protestant Christians, which by no means comport with these rules, and which do not at all savour of the simplicity and humility of the Gospel; or consist with believing or obeying no teacher, Church-ruler, learned doctor, or head of a sect, in the least matter, further than he evidently declares the truth and will of Christ, our common Teacher and Lord. It is observable, that assuming priests of all religions have been ambitious of being called, "father," or of some such name; importing rather what they are conscious they ought to be, than what they really were. The following citations show to what an exorbitant height the claims of the Rabbies were advanced. 'The words of the fathers were equal to the words of the law, and more to be regarded than the words of the prophets: a prophet was not to be believed, except he could show a sign; —but as for these fathers, they were to be believed without.' If a thousand prophets, equal to Elias and Elisha, bring one interpretation, and a thousand and one wise men produce one contrary to it, we must incline to the most, and be obliged rather to act according to the sentence of these wise men, than of the thousand prophets.' (Whitby.) These were, in some sense, the school-masters of the Romish bishops and clergy, who have exceedingly profited by their instructions.

V. 11, 12. Our Lord further observed, that if any one was in reality the greatest, he should show it, by being more active, humble, and condescending, than others; and by becoming the willing servant, rather than the domineering lord, of the whole fraternity: for it was the invariable

rule of his kingdom, to abase all who exalted themselves, and to advance all who abased themselves. (Marg. Ref.) — No one sentence of our Lord occurs so often as this.' (Doddridge.)

V. 13. Our Lord next addressed the Scribes and Pharisees who stood around him; and without any reserve, in the character of their heart-searching judge, he exposed their hypocrisy and wickedness, and denounced sentence against them; as he had before done in some measure on another occasion. (Notes, Luke xi. 37—54.) He first convicted them of "shutting the kingdom of heaven against men." They pretended to be teachers; yet they used all their influence and authority to set the people against him, and to keep them from becoming the subjects of his kingdom. Thus they wickedly destroyed the souls of numbers, to support their own reputation, dominion, and worldly interest: for, being blinded by their carnal lusts and prejudices, they would neither themselves receive him as the Messiah, nor permit those who seemed disposed to it; and by keeping them out of the heavenly kingdom that was set up among them, they did all in their power to shut them out of the kingdom of future glory and felicity. 'They refused to go in themselves: they obstructed the entrance of others, by saying, "Have any of the rulers or Pharisees believed in him?" They cavilled at all he said: they accused him of blasphemy, and of casting out devils by Beelzebub: and they communicated those who owned his doctrine.' (Whitby.) 'Hypocrites can abide none better than themselves.' (Beza.)

V. 14. The Scribes and Pharisees, by pretensions to extraordinary piety, insinuated themselves into the confidence of the people, and perhaps induced many persons, when they died, to leave them in trust for their widows and families. Thus they got the effects into their hands, and on one pretence or other defrauded the widows and orphans of their property; as if they had swallowed up the whole at once, in the manner that some greedy animals devour their food. But to avoid suspicion and to silence every complaint, they made long formal prayer; which prevented the deluded people from believing any report to their disadvantage. Thus religion was disgraced, by being made the covering of enormous oppression; and God was dishonoured, as if he had been a partner in the robbery! They would therefore be more terribly punished in another world than other wicked men; yea, than other oppressors, who had not professed piety as the cloak of iniquity.

V. 15. The Scribes and Pharisees were very zealous

17 **Woe** unto you, ^b ye blind guides, which say, ^c Whosoever shall swear by the temple, ^d it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, ^e he is a debtor!

17 **Ye** fools, and blind! for whether is greater, the gold, ^f or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

18 And, whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is ^g guilty.

19 **Ye** fools, and blind! for whether is greater, the gift, ^h or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.

21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, ⁱ and by him that dwelleth therein.

22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth ^j by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

23 **Woe** unto you, Scribes and Pha-

risees, hypocrites! ^k for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted ^l the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: ^m these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone,

24 **Ye** blind guides, ⁿ which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

25 **Woe** unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! ^o for ye make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but within they are ^p full of extortion and excess.

26 *Thou* blind Pharisee! ^q cleanse first that *which is* within the cup and the platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

27 **Woe** unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are ^r like unto whitened ^s sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

28 Even so ^t ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, ^u but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

and assiduous in endeavouring to make proselytes to the Jewish religion, and to their own sect; not from a desire to promote the glory of God, or the salvation of souls, but in order to strengthen their party, and to advance their reputation. When therefore they had, with immense pains, got any one under their tuition, they worked him up to such a degree of ignorant and furious bigotry, and enmity to Christ and his Gospel, that he became fit for the most desperate services, to which they could direct him. So that, instead of being benefited by his supposed conversion, he became a more devoted servant of Satan, and more deeply deserving of divine wrath, than before: and as he might be pushed on to such actions as they declined, he became even two-fold more a child of hell than themselves; that is, more openly and outrageously mischievous, and blasphemous, in opposing the cause of Christ, and in persecuting believers.

V. 16—22. Our Lord next exposed the ignorance of these almost adored teachers. They taught that men were not bound by an oath, when they swore by the temple, or by the altar; yet were guilty of perjury, if they swore falsely by the gold in the sacred treasury, or by the sacrifices. This decision led the people to a stupid veneration for the latter, in preference to the former, and served the interests of the priests and scribes: but it exposed their folly and blindness in the most evident manner; for the gold and the sacrifices had no other sanctity, than what they derived from the temple and the altar, which must therefore be greater and more honourable, than the oblations on which they conferred a relative sanctity. In fact, these oaths referred to whatever was connected with that which was sworn by: an oath by the altar, included the gift upon

it; and an oath by the temple, the God whose typical residence it was, as well as the gold that was there consecrated to him: even as when a man swore by heaven, he swore by the throne of God and him that sat on it. Our Lord had before disallowed all such oaths: they are profane in common conversation, and not solemn enough on important occasions: but he here shows, that they imply an appeal to God for the truth of what is thus declared, or promised. (Note v. 33—37.)

V. 23, 24. Another instance of the blindness of the Jewish teachers is here adduced. They were very scrupulous in minute externals, but very lax in important matters. They professed to be so tender in their consciences, that they paid tithe even of garden-herbs; but they neglected justice, mercy, sincerity, and fidelity, in their conduct towards man, as well as their most important duties to God. These were the most weighty requirements of the moral law, which must be obligatory under every dispensation: and if they had attended to them, it would then have been proper to have observed the most minute requirements of the ritual law: but to be exact in trifles, and devoid of conscience in matters of vast importance, was egregiously absurd. They strained at a gnat, or strained a small insect out of their liquor, lest it should choke them; and yet they could on occasion swallow down a camel. We must suppose this to have been a common proverb; denoting, that the sins which they committed were as much larger than those that they scrupled, as a camel is larger than an insect.

V. 25—26. These Scribes and Pharisees, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised "others," and proudly rejected the salvation of Christ, were mere hypocrites. They acted as absurdly, as a man

x Luke xi. 47, 48.
Acts ii. 29.

29 Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

34 ¶ Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

would do, who should carefully wash the outside of his cup or dish, and yet leave the inside filthy and nauseous with the remains of his former excesses. They were careful to maintain a decent exterior, and to practise outward duties, as far as human inspection could reach; but they paid no attention to the state of their imaginations or affections: so that avarice, pride, and sensuality, reigned with uncontrolled dominion in their hearts; and induced them covertly to grasp at wealth by extortion, and to spend it in inordinate self-indulgence. This proved them blind, and ignorant of God, of his law, of true religion, and of themselves: for common sense might have directed them, to begin first with their hearts; and when they had been cleansed from the love of sin and its gains and pleasures, their external conduct would of course have become clean. Indeed they only resembled the sepulchres of rich persons, which being painted and decorated, appeared beautiful to the beholder; yet they contained nothing but dead men's bones, putrid corpses, and such things as were loathsome and polluting. Thus they appeared righteous to their neighbours, but God saw and abhorred their inward and secret wickedness, though varnished over by hypocrisy. The touch of a grave communicated a ceremonial uncleanness. (*Marg. Ref.*) The Jews, therefore, used to whiten them with lime, or other materials: and some learned men are of opinion, that the word *beautiful* does not refer to the grave when whitened, but when grown over with grass and flowers. But this does not agree with the text; for the Pharisees were like *whited* sepulchres, not like those which were grown over with grass: and in those days, as well as in modern times, they, who could afford it, adorned and beautified the tombs of their deceased friends.

V. 29—33. 'By the just judgment of God, hypocrites, when they most seek to cover their crimes, most expose themselves to disgrace.' (*Beza.*)—It is probable, that some allusion was here intended to the preceding comparison. Not only did the principal persons decorate the tombs of their relations, or of distinguished princes and conquerors, but they especially put themselves to expense in repairing and adorning the sepulchres of the prophets, whom their ancestors had murdered for their faithfulness. They professed exceedingly to disapprove the conduct of

these persecutors; and avowed, that, had they then lived, they would not have concurred in them. Yet they hated the doctrines and precepts which the prophets taught; and rejected, with determined scorn and enmity, the Messiah whom they predicted; nay, they were even at that time counselling to put him to death! In fact, the dead prophets no longer gave offence to their pride, or interfered with their favourite sins; and it increased their reputation, and aided their hypocrisy, to appear as their friends: but Christ and his disciples greatly offended and exposed them. So that comparing their profession and conduct together, it was evident, by their own testimony, that they were the genuine offspring of those who slew the prophets; and so had no occasion to be proud of their descent. But let them lay aside these disguises, and openly proceed to commit those crimes which they were meditating, and which would fill up the measure of their fathers' iniquity: for they were a most subtle and poisonous race of serpents, a generation of vipers, the brood of the old serpent: and how could such enemies to God, his truth, and salvation, escape the damnation of hell by any of their hypocritical observances or vain pretences? It is remarkable, that the most severe and awful things contained in Scripture were spoken by Jesus Christ himself.

V. 34—36. 'By your hatred against me and mine, you further show your likeness to your fathers in disposition: so that I foresee, that of those wise men whom I shall send to you, some you will persecute, and some you will kill and crucify: that so upon you may justly fall the punishment of all the blood of the prophets and righteous men shed by your fathers, and by their children in iniquity.' (*Whitby. Notes, Ez. xviii.*)—Christ here evidently speaks in his own name, and as acting by his own authority. He was about to send his apostles and evangelists, as prophets, wise men, and scribes, well instructed unto the kingdom of God, to declare to the Jewish nation his truth and salvation: but he foresaw, that the Jews would put some of them to cruel and ignominious deaths, and treat others with great indignity and enmity. For they would be left to this insatuated conduct, that they might ripen for the destruction which the nation had so long deserved, and that the guilt and punishment of all the right-

y 34, 35 xxi. 35, 36.

xxxi. 15, 16.

Jer. ii. 30.

z Josh. xxiv. 22.

Job. xiv. 5, 6.

Ps. lxxv. 8.

Luke xxi. 22.

a Acts vii. 51, 52.

i Thes. ii. 15, 16.

b Gen. xxi. 15.

Numb. xxxii. 14.

Zechar. v. 3—11.

c iii. 7, xii. 34.

Gen. iii. 15.

Isa. i. 3—5.

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Isa. i. 3—5.

CHAP. XXIV.

Christ foretells the destruction of the temple, 1, 2; and the preceding signs and attendant calamities, intermixing counsels and warnings, 3—28; also the subse-

quent revolutions and miseries, in figurative language, which may be understood of the end of the world, 29—31. By the parable of a fig-tree, he shows the certainty of the prediction, 32—35.

Messiah's kingdom; till they became willing to submit to him, who came to them "in the name of the Lord;" and to be thankful for his spiritual kingdom and salvation. (Note xxi. 9.) No doubt but their present dispersion and unbelief, and their future conversion to Christ, are here predicted. (Note Luke xix. 41—44.) With this solemn prophetic warning our Lord closed his public ministry, and finally left the temple.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—7.

It has been too common in every age, for those in the highest stations in the visible Church to be strangers and enemies to the power of godliness; and to be the very reverse of those to whom they seem to succeed in their sacred functions. We must not, however, think the worse of the truths and ordinances of God on that account; but must observe and do whatever they Scripturally command and teach. Yet we should guard against their perversions, and not imitate any part of their ungodly conduct: for, loose as the principles of such men are, their lives are still worse, and they are far from practising even the scanty measure of duty which they teach. Indeed, if the human inventions and uncommanded austerities, which some of this description enforce with great rigour on men's consciences, be taken into the account, they may be said to "bind up heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and to lay them on men's shoulders;" but their negligence and self-indulgence have often evidenced, that they disdained to move them with one of their fingers; except as ambition and vain-glory led them to do some worthless externals, to be seen of men, and to amuse and dazzle superficial observers, with a splendid superstition: and thus to render appearances of piety subservient to their love of homage, distinction, and authority. How contrary is this to the humble, unassuming, and self-abasing spirit of Christianity! He that is consistently a disciple of Christ, courts privacy for his duties, and delights most to commune with his Father in secret: he steps forth into notoriety with reluctance; and is *pained by*, instead of loving, the chief places, either in private houses or public congregations; as he is disposed to make choice of the lowest place, and in honour to prefer others to himself.

V. 8—12.

Who, that looks around him into the visible Church, could think that a lowly unassuming spirit was essential to Christianity, and expressly required by its divine Author? Who could suppose that his disciples were forbidden to be called Rabbi, or Master? to usurp dominion over others, or to submit to such usurpation? It is evident that there are many antichrists, and that some measure of this spirit prevails in every religious society. Much remains to be

done in all parts of the Church, before Christians will live together as brethren, the children of one common Father, the disciples and subjects of one common Lord and Master in the equality of genuine humble love and harmony; and before no one aspires to be greatest in any other way, than by becoming the servant of the whole fraternity for Jesus' sake. We have all much to learn and to unlearn, before we can be completely qualified to form a part of such a company: whilst we therefore lament the horrid evils, the spiritual tyranny and abject slavery, the damnable heresies, superstitions, idolatries, persecutions, and bloody contentions, which have resulted from the spirit of pride and ambition, let us watch against it in our own hearts: let us aspire after no honour, except that of being accepted by our Master, being useful to our brethren, and known as the children of our Father which is in heaven. But let us by no means call any man Father upon earth, or so attach ourselves to any leader or teacher, as to be more properly his disciples than the disciples of Christ; and let us believe and follow no man, any further than he follows our common Lord. This well consists with the deepest humility, which must never be lost sight of, if we would be truly wise, honourable, or happy. In proportion as men endeavour to exalt themselves into consequence and eminence, the Lord will surely abase them; he will save none that continue proud and ambitious; he seldom employs self-sufficient instruments; he will expose to disgrace even his own servants, if they begin to be aspiring, and desirous of honour from men; but he will exalt to real eminence, usefulness, and felicity, those who are abased as sinners in his sight, and are humbly willing to be despised of men, and to attend to the meanest service of love to his people.

V. 13—25.

It gives great offence, yet on some occasions it is most necessary, to expose the hypocrisy, wickedness, and blindness of false teachers; especially when they have acquired influence, and are eminent for learning, reputation, or authority. In such circumstances, they often mislead numbers into fatal errors, and harden them in sin. It does not, indeed, become us to speak in such decisive language of their characters, or in that authoritative manner of their state and punishment, as he did, "who knew what was in man," and to whom all judgment belongs. But it is common for such men to lay themselves so open by their egregious absurdities, or enormous crimes, that it becomes obvious that they are blind guides, or subtle deceivers, who are going the broad road, and leading their disciples in the same destructive course. What discoveries will Christ then make in the great day of account, when he shall strip off the mask from every character, and show every man exactly as he is! They who are peculiarly appointed to guide men into the way of salvation, often use all their force to shut the kingdom of heaven against them: hating

2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

3 ¶ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you:

5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

6 And ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV. V. 1, 2. (Notes, Mark xiii. Luke xxi.) The apostle John does not mention the prophecy contained in this chapter: for it is probable, that he wrote his Gospel after the destruction of Jerusalem. Our Lord, having finally departed from the temple, with the awful reproofs and predictions contained in the close of the preceding chapter; the disciples, perhaps adverting to his discourse, came and pointed out to him the buildings of it, as filled with admiration. According to Josephus, these were exceedingly magnificent and beautiful, and constructed with the greatest stability; so that it was extremely improbable they should be entirely destroyed, except in a long course of time: no one therefore, who was not conscious of speaking with divine authority, would have ventured to deliver such a prediction, as that which follows. (Note, Luke xxi. 5.) But, the Redeemer, with a peculiar dignity, as one conversant with spiritual and heavenly glories, and regardless of exterior splendour, simply assured the disciples, that "not one stone would be left upon another," of all this vast and stately pile of buildings. When Jerusalem was taken, Titus, the Roman general, desired exceedingly to preserve the temple, either from regard to its sanctity, or as a monument of his victory: but the pertinacity of the infatuated Jews, and the fierce revenge of the soldiers, defeated his purpose. The temple was repeatedly set fire to, contrary to his strict orders and menaces, and at last the fire could not be extinguished; and when it had done its utmost, the residue of the structure was demolished and the materials removed, in order to search for the treasure that was buried under its ruins: so that in the event the very foundations were subverted, and the ground on which it stood was plowed up. Thus the prophecy received an exact and literal accomplishment, in about forty years after it was uttered.

V. 3. After our Lord had removed with his disciples to the mount of Olives, where they had the temple full in view, they privately asked him some questions concerning the events which he had mentioned; but their meaning is not very clear and explicit. Perhaps they had a general idea that he would go from them for a time, before he set up his kingdom; that he would at length come in a very glorious manner, according to several intimations which he had given them; that he would then execute the predicted vengeance on his enemies, destroy the temple,

terminate that dispensation, and introduce his own glorious reign as the Messiah. Some expositors suppose this to be the meaning of the phrase translated, *the end of the world.* (Marg. Ref.) But it is difficult to determine what opinions the disciples then held concerning that subsequent dispensation: and perhaps they scarcely knew the precise meaning of their own questions: for their views were as yet very dark and confused. Some suppose that they thought that the day of judgment and the end of the world would be immediately connected with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple; and that our Lord did not see good explicitly to undeceive them. Indeed, this is not improbable; for the latter part of the chapter is couched in language very applicable to those events; and it is proper for prophecy to be in some measure obscure till it is accomplished. The general import, however, of their inquiry was, When the events before intimated would take place? and what signs would indicate their approach?—Being asked by the disciples, when those things, which he had intimated concerning the desolation of the temple, should take place, he set before them the order of the times, first concerning the Jews, till the destruction of Jerusalem, and then concerning men in general, till the end of the world. (Tertullian.)

V. 4, 5. Our Lord, in replying, first cautioned the disciples to take heed that they were not deceived: for, one sign of the predicted events being about to take place would be, that many persons would pretend to be the Christ or Messiah; thus coming in his name, and as it were intruding into his office, and so fatally deceiving numbers. History informs us of several such false Messiahs, that made their appearance previously to the destruction of Jerusalem. 'One Dositheus said that he was the Christ foretold by Moses; and Simon Magus, who said that he appeared among the Jews as the Son of God.' 'In the reign of Nero, when Felix was procurator of Judea, such a number of these impostors made their appearance, that many of them were seized and put to death.' (Bp. Porteus. Josephus.) These deceivers, promising the Jews deliverance from the Roman yoke, and temporal dominion, drew after them many followers, and excited great insurrections: this exasperated the Romans; numbers perished miserably, and the siege and destruction of Jerusalem were accelerated by these commotions. At the same time, they took off men's attention from the Gospel, and occasioned many to perish, by neglecting its salvation.

8 All ^a these are the beginning of sorrows.

9 Then ^a shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

10 And then ^a shall many be offended, and shall ^a betray one another, and shall hate one another.

11 And ^a many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

12 And ^a because iniquity shall abound, ^a the love of many shall wax cold.

13 But ^a he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

V. 6-8. This next sign related to the state of the Jews and the neighbouring nations, when the predicted time drew nigh. Our Lord warned the disciples not to be troubled by the terrible wars which they witnessed, or heard of, so as to leave their stations; supposing that the ruin of the nation would immediately take place. These events must indeed happen, and they would forebode that desolation; but the end of the city and state of the Jews would not yet arrive. Many such wars and bloody contests must take place, both with the Jews and among the surrounding nations, together with famines, pestilences, and earthquakes: yet all these miseries would only resemble the first and slighter pains of a travailing woman, which assuredly presage the approach of more extreme anguish.—An account of the wars, insurrections, tumults, and massacres, which took place in that part of the world, prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, would form the best comment on this passage; together with copious extracts from Josephus and other historians, of several famines and pestilences, that made great havoc in many countries; and of terrible earthquakes, in Crete, in Asia Minor, in Italy, and Judea. The latter is thus described: “By night there broke out a most dreadful tempest, and violent strong winds, with the most vehement showers, and continued lightnings, horrid thunders, and prodigious howlings of the earth: so that it was manifest, that the constitution of the universe was confounded, for the destruction of men.” These things can here be no more than hinted at: it suffices to observe, that by the concurrent testimony of ancient historians, and the judgment of modern learned men, the period alluded to was distinguished from all others that went before and that followed, by such events as are here predicted.

V. 9-14. The persecutions, which the disciples would themselves experience, formed the next sign of the times. (*Marg. Ref.*) When these should be excited, many professors of Christianity would be stumbled, and apostatize for fear of sufferings; and then to ingratiate themselves with the persecutors, they would become traitors and bitter enemies to the Christians, and concur in apprehending them and exercising cruelties on them. At the same time many false prophets would appear among the Christians, as dis-

14 And ^a this gospel of the kingdom ^a shall be preached in the world, for a witness unto all nations: ^a and then shall the end come.

15 When ^a ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of ^a by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (^a whoso readeth, let him understand:)

16 Then ^a let him which is in Judea flee into the mountains:

17 Let him ^a which is on ^a the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house;

18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

tinct from the false Christs above-mentioned, “speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” These would deceive many souls, and bring an additional odium on the cause, by their corrupt tenets and practices. (2 *Pet.* ii. 1, 2.) And through the prevalence of treachery, injustice, cruelty, and all kinds of wickedness, many, who did not openly apostatize, would become lukewarm; they would lose their apparent zeal for the cause, and love to their brethren, and become shy of them, and afraid of showing any favour to them. Yet some would continue steadfast in the midst of these multiplied and varied difficulties; and they would be preserved from all real evil, and be saved for ever. Notwithstanding all these commotions and scandals, the Gospel would soon be preached through the various nations of the Roman empire, and in the different parts of the then known world; for a witness to them, that the Messiah was come, to be “a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be for salvation to the ends of the earth:” and when this should be accomplished, the end of the Jewish Church and state would come. It appears from the most credible records, that the Gospel was preached in Idumea, Syria, and Mesopotamia, by Jude; in Egypt, Marmora, Mauritania, and other parts of Africa, by Mark, Simon, and Jude; in Ethiopia, by Candace’s Eunuch and Matthias; in Pontus, Gallatia, and the neighbouring parts of Asia, by Peter; in the territories of the seven Asiatic Churches by John; in Parthia, by Matthew; in Scythia, by Philip and Andrew; in the northern and western parts of Asia, by Bartholomew; in Persia, by Simon and Jude; in Media, Carmania, and several eastern parts, by Thomas; through the vast tract from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum, by Paul, as also in Italy, and probably in Spain, Gaul, and Britain: in most of which places Christian Churches were planted, in less than thirty years after the death of Christ, which was before the destruction of Jerusalem. (*Doddridge.*) “The world and Satan furiously raging to no purpose; the Gospel shall be every where propagated, and they that constantly believe it shall be saved.” “When Jerusalem shall be utterly destroyed, the Church, so far from being desolated, shall be extended to the utmost borders of the earth.” (*Beza.*) (*Marg. Ref.*)

b. iv. 23. ix. 35.
25. 7. Acts x.
26. 7. Acts x.
c. xxviii. 18 Mark
xvi. 15. 16 Luke
x. 10. 17. Act. i.
8. Rom. x. 18.
xv. 18-21. xvi.
23. 26. Col. i. 6.
d. 3. 6 Ez. vii. 5-
7. 10.
e. 1. 10. x. 14.
f. 1. 10. x. 14.
g. 1. 10. x. 14.
h. 1. 10. x. 14.
i. 1. 10. x. 14.
j. 1. 10. x. 14.
k. 1. 10. x. 14.
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p. 1. 10. x. 14.
q. 1. 10. x. 14.
r. 1. 10. x. 14.
s. 1. 10. x. 14.
t. 1. 10. x. 14.
u. 1. 10. x. 14.
v. 1. 10. x. 14.
w. 1. 10. x. 14.
x. 1. 10. x. 14.
y. 1. 10. x. 14.
z. 1. 10. x. 14.

q Mark xiii 23. Luke xvi 31. 24. xxi 8. John v 41.
 r 5. 11. 2 Pet ii 1-3. 11. 12.
 s 2. 2. 2 Thes ii 9-11. Rev xxi 13. 14.
 t John vi 27. x 28-30. Rom xiii 28-39.
 u Mark xiii 22. Acts xx. 16. Rom xii 18. Gal iv 15. — x Is. xlv. 7, 8. xlv. 10, 11. xlviii 5, 6. Luke xxi 13. John xvi. 1.

23 Then if any man shall say unto you, 'Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.
 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets; and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, * if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

25 Behold, * I have told you before.

V. 23—25. When these calamities began to take place, the Jews were full of expectations that the Messiah would speedily appear for their deliverance: and the lower they were reduced, the more readily they listened to every report of this kind. So that many impostors were emboldened to assert their claim to this character, professing to work miracles in support of it. (*Marg. Ref.*) The artifice of man, and the power of Satan, if he be permitted, can doubtless produce effects, which appear miraculous, though they will not bear to be compared with the incontestable miracles wrought by Christ and his apostles. (*Notes, Matt. xiii. 1—5. 2 Thes. ii. 9, 10.*) The signs and wonders wrought by these impostors would, however, have such a semblance of divine power, as to deceive many, and would be sufficient to impose even upon the elect, were that possible. But, by the decision of Christ, *this is not possible*: the elect cannot be fatally and finally deceived; because men and devils cannot defeat the purpose of God, who "hath chosen them unto salvation." Professing Christians in general cannot here be meant by the elect; for many of these actually were deceived, and apostatized. "Their election of God," and that grace by which he effected his merciful purposes concerning them, were the security of real Christians; and the same cause would secure from fatal deception, those whom God had foreknown and chosen, but who were not yet called to the knowledge of Christ and his salvation. (*Rom. viii. 28—30.*) As a means of preservation, to those who regarded the word of Christ, he told them before-hand, what calamities were coming on Jerusalem, and what deceivers would at that time arise. 'The delusions of their signs and wonders shall be so strong, that the world shall be utterly carried away therewith, and, if it were possible that the very elect of God could be miscarried by them, they should also be deceived.' Were it not more of the grace and mercy of that powerful God who sustaineth them, and that infallible decree by which they are ordained to life, than of any power and wisdom of their own, they could not stand against these strong delusions.' (*Bp. Hall.*) 'They will be likely to draw many after them, even the most sincere persevering Christians, if it were possible for any deceit to work upon them.' (*Hammond.*) The arguments against this interpretation, which some learned men have used, go on the supposition, that all the elect know themselves to be so; that there are other methods of "making our calling and election sure," and professing "the full assurance of hope unto the end," besides vigilance, and diligence in every duty and means of grace; and that God preserves his elect, without their willing concurrence,

26 Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

28 For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

instead of "working in them to will and do of his good pleasure;" and so leading them "to work out of their own salvation with fear and trembling." The instances, in which this expression, "if it be possible," is used, are not many: but they all imply, that the persons spoken of at least doubted, whether it would be possible for them to obtain their requests, or accomplish their purposes, though the thing might not be in itself impossible. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 26—28. The apostles were here cautioned, and instructed to caution the converts to Christianity, to disregard all the reports which were circulated to this effect; whether they were assured, that the Messiah was in the desert, waiting to be joined by the people, in order to march for the deliverance of Jerusalem; or whether he was said to be in some secret chamber, among his friends, and about to make his more public appearance. We find from history that such deceivers actually arose; some collecting followers in the wilderness, and others caballing with their adherents in secret chambers; and that they were instrumental in accelerating and aggravating the ruin of their country. Josephus mentions one of these pretenders, who declared to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that God commanded them to go up into some particular part of the temple, — and there they should receive the signs of deliverance. A multitude of men, women, and children, went up accordingly: but, instead of deliverance, the place was set on fire by the Romans, and six thousand perished miserably in the flames, or, by endeavouring to escape them.' (*Bp. Porteus.*) The Christians, if they had not been forewarned, might have been deceived on another ground: for they expected their Lord to come, not to deliver, but to destroy Jerusalem: they were therefore reminded, that his coming for this purpose would not be secret or local; but like the lightning, that shineth at once from east to west; for in his righteous providence, he would with conspicuous and irresistible energy desolate the whole land. The Roman armies entered Judea by the east, and carried their victorious ravages to the west, in a very rapid and tremendous manner. Our Lord further added, that "wheresoever the carcass was, there would the eagles be gathered together." The Jewish nation, spiritually dead and about to be given up to destruction, was the carcass that was doomed to be the prey of the Roman armies; these were represented by the most ravenous birds of prey, to denote their force and fury, and perhaps because they had eagles for their standards. The history of those times records the multiplied massacres and devastations of the Jews, in different parts of the world; as if they had attracted the de-

c. 8 Mark xlii

d. 23.

d. 18 xlii. xlv.

23 Jer. iv. 20.

29 Ez. xxxiv. 7.

8 Joel. i. 30, 31.

10. 15 Am. v.

10. Zeph. i. 14.

15. Luke xxi.

25. 26. Acts ii.

12-17.

e. 3 Dan. vii. 13.

Mark xlii. 4.

f. Zech. xlii. 4.

Rev. i. 7.

g. x. 127, 28 xxi.

61. Mark xlii.

23. x. 12-14.

Luke xxi. 27.

Acts i. 11. 2.

Thes. i. 7, 8.

h. xxviii. 10 Mark

xvi. 15, 16.

Luko xxiv. 47.

Acts xxv. 19.

29.

i. xlii. 41. xxv. 31.

Rev. i. 20. ii. 1.

x. 6-9.

k. Num. x. 1-10.

Ps. lxxxi. 3. Is.

xxviii. 13. 1 Cor.

xv. 52. 1 Thes.

iv. 16.

l. Or. a trumpet

and a great

voice.

Is. xi. 12. xlii.

18. ix. 4. Mark

xii. 27. John

xi. 52. Eph. i.

10. 2 Thes. i. 1.

m. Ps. xlii. 27.

Numb. 7. Is. xli. 5.

xlii. 28, 29. Luke

xxi. 29, 30. —o 3.

29 ¶ Immediately after the tribulation of those days, "shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.

31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

32 ¶ Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see

all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

38 For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

40 Then shall two be in the field;

41. 3-6. Luke xii. 19. 45. xv. 18-20. xlii. 26-28. xli. 34, 35. Rom. xii. 13, 14. 1 Cor. vii. 29-31. —y xlii. 13-15. Jude x. 24. P. 10. xlii. 25. xlv. 17. Is. xlii. 25. xlii. 17. Luke xix. 44. John iii. 20. Acts xii. 41. Rom. i. 28. 2 Pet. iii. 5.

stroying sword of the Romans, wherever they resided, or withersoever they fled for safety.

V. 29—31. The language of these verses is suited, and probably was intended, to lead the mind of the reader to the consideration of the end of the world, and the coming of Christ to judgment: yet the expression, "immediately after the tribulation of those days," must restrict the primary sense of them to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the events that were consequent on it. (Notes, Is. xlii. 10. xxxiv. 3—7. Jer. iv. 23—25. Marg. Ref.) The darkening of the sun and moon, the falling of the stars, and the shaking of the powers of the heavens, denote the utter extinction of the light of prosperity and privilege to the Jewish nation; the unbinding of their whole constitution in Church and state; the violent subversion of the authority of their princes and priests; and the abject miseries to which the people in general, especially their chief persons, would be reduced, and the moral darkness to which they would be consigned. This would be an evident sign and demonstration of the Son of man's exaltation to his throne in heaven; whence he would come, in his divine providence, as riding upon "the clouds of heaven with power" and great glory, to destroy his enemies, who would not "have him to reign over them;" at which events all the tribes of the land would mourn and lament, whilst they saw the tokens, and felt the weight of his terrible indignation. At the same time he would send forth his angels, (or messengers, the preachers of the Gospel, Marg. Ref.) as with a great sound of a trumpet, proclaiming the year of jubilee, "the acceptable year of the Lord." Thus he would gather his elect into his Church, from every quarter, all over the world. The remarkable appearances in the heavens, that attended these transactions, might be alluded to, and the great spread of the Gospel about the time of

the destruction of Jerusalem was predicted; but the whole passage will have a more literal and august accomplishment at the day of judgment.

V. 32—35. Our Lord here answers the former part of the apostle's question, concerning the time when these events would take place. In general he assured them, that their approach would be as certainly determined by the signs that he had mentioned, as the approach of summer was by the budding and the tender branch of the fig-tree; and that they would all be accomplished before that generation was passed away. This absolutely restricts our primary interpretation of the prophecy to the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place within forty years. To which he added, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." The performance and effects of his words would be found more stable and durable, than the visible creation: this would at length wax old, and vanish away; but not a tittle of his word would fail of its accomplishment, and the effects of it would subsist to all eternity. This is as applicable to all Christ's words, as to this prediction. He that shall compare the words of our Saviour with those of Josephus, concerning the war of the Jews, cannot but admire the wisdom of Christ, and own his predictions to have been divine. (Eusebius.) It is indisputable, that the three Gospels, in which the substance of this prophecy is given, were extant and widely dispersed, a considerable time before the siege of Jerusalem was begun: and that the Christians, believing the words of their Lord, left Judea and were preserved. Probably none of these three evangelists, (and perhaps none of the apostles, except John.) lived to witness the fulfilment of this astonishing prediction: and some particulars, not here explicitly mentioned, have been fulfilling to this present day. (Note, Luke xxi. 24.)

CHAP. XXV.

The parable of the wise and foolish virgins, 1—13; that of the talents committed

to servants of different characters, 14—30; and a solemn representation of the day of judgment, out of its interesting proceedings and consequences, 31—46.

ministers of Christianity are, doubtless, immediately intended. "Mahomet mentions seven caverns in hell, the deepest and most wretched of which is to be inhabited by hypocrites." (Doddridge.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—3.

The more spiritual our minds are, the less we shall be attracted with external splendor, either in the world, or in the worship of God. If we continually meditate on the glories of his character and works, created beauty will feebly affect our minds, except as it leads our thoughts to the uncreated Source of beauty and excellency. The true temple is built upon a living Foundation, and consists of living stones; and it therefore shall for ever endure "an habitation of God through the Spirit;" but all other edifices, sacred or profane, will soon be thrown down, and not one stone of them left upon another. We ought to apply to our great Teacher for instruction, in every matter that perplexes us: but it is more important for us to be put upon our guard against fatal deceptions, than to be informed of the exact time when the prophecies shall be fulfilled, when the world shall end, or when Christ shall come to judgment. Even true Christians are liable to be drawn into mistakes, injurious to themselves and others, and dishonourable to their profession, by those who come in the name of Christ, and pretend to declare the will of God; when they draw men off from attending to his word, and delude multitudes to their destruction. Whilst we meditate on the extraordinary prophecy in this chapter, with deep conviction of the truth of our divine religion; let us apply it to our edification, by considering the events predicted as typical of far more important transactions. In the prospect of the approaching season of final retribution, we must grieve, if real Christians, to see so many deceived into a presumptuous hope and fallacious peace. Wars, insurrections, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, which desolate nations, will also excite our sympathizing concern: yet we should not be too much discomposed at hearing of them; for the Lord is thus carrying on his grand designs, in perfect wisdom, justice, truth, and mercy. It is a vain superstition to conclude from such events, that the end of the world is at hand; for they have occurred again and again, in different ages, to answer some wise purposes; but we are not competent to know the designs of God, in his mysterious dispensations. To ungodly men, the most tremendous temporal calamities are but "the beginnings of sorrows;" and the prevalence of impiety is, in fact, a far more awful dispensation, than any other judgment.

V. 9—15.

In this evil world believers must experience, as well as afflictions; not only in common with other men, but many which are peculiar to themselves.

If we escape bloody persecution, we must expect to be treated with contempt, loaded with reproach, and hated by the wicked of every description. This sharp trial is often increased by our being called to weep over such as are fallen, and to tremble for ourselves, lest we also should be offended. Apostates often prove the most treacherous and rancorous enemies of those with whom they formerly associated: for the evil spirit, that was gone out, hath returned with "seven others more wicked than himself;" and the last state of such men must be worse than the "first." These things loudly call upon us to pray for ourselves and our brethren; and to dread the least beginnings of negligence in attending on the great concerns of our souls. But besides the greedy wolves, that are sometimes let loose to waste the flock; men also "arise from among ourselves, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them;" whose pernicious tenets and unholy lives bring still greater scandal on the cause of Christ. When iniquity thus abounds, the love of many, nay of most, professors of the Gospel, is apt to wax cold; they grow lukewarm and selfish, devoid of heavenly zeal or brotherly affection; and only warm in the fierce disputes and controversies, which they agitate with each other, instead of uniting against their common enemies. Yet, in the midst of all these evils, there is a remnant, who endure every trial, as gold abides the fire; these, and these only, continue unto the end, and are saved, being "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." Notwithstanding all the efforts of earth and hell, and all the evils that are found within the Church, the Gospel must be preached in all the world, and with the most glorious success through all nations, before the end come: and let us endeavour so to understand the prophecies that relate to these events, that we may know the duties incumbent on us, according "to the signs of the times," in which we live. While we remember that the abominations of idolatry, within the Christian Church, are sure indications either of approaching desolations, or of spiritual judgments still more to be dreaded; let us learn to separate from such corruptors, and shun all approaches to such corruptions, of our holy faith.

V. 16—28.

If the danger of temporal calamities renders it reasonable for men to leave all and flee for their lives, how proper is it for us to forsake all, that we may win Christ and be delivered from the wrath to come! He that believes will take warning, and without delay "flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him;" but the unbeliever, having been often warned in vain, will at length perish without remedy. If a man would rather save his life, without money or clothes, than be slain in going back to fetch them; "what is he profited, who gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" We should then avoid even those lawful things, which have an evident or a pro-

• Luke 42: 51. a
Luke xxi. 34
— 35
• Tit. 2. xlii. 24
21. 21. 42. 47. xxi. 1. xxi. 2. Dan ii. 44 — c Ps. xlv. 14. Cant. i. 3. v. 8. vi. 1.
8. Rev. xiv. 4.

THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins,

able tendency to prevent our eternal good: and we ought to pray earnestly to the great Disposer of all events, 'to keep from us all things hurtful to our salvation, and 'to give us all things that are profitable to the same.' The greatest tribulation, that ever was or ever shall be witnessed upon earth, befel those who crucified the Lord of glory, and persisted in rejecting his Gospel: "How then shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation," as is set before us in his word? The future punishment of unbelievers will doubtless be so dire a tribulation, that all the complicated miseries, which have been known on earth, cannot give us an adequate idea of it: nor will the days of that *only evil* be shortened; as none of the elect will be exposed to it, that for their sake it should be mitigated or terminated. Let us then "give diligence to make our calling and election sure;" then we may know that no enemy, or deceiver, shall ever prevail against us: and let us abide in Christ and seek to have his words abide in us; that we may be aware of the various methods which Satan and his instruments will take to impose upon us. If we remember what he hath told us before-hand, we shall not listen to those deceivers, who, having new modelled the Gospel, cry out, "Lo, here is Christ! Or, lo, he is there!" when in fact he is to be found only in his word and ordinances, and on his throne of grace. Such persons as deal in imposition or pretended miracles, love to perform their exploits in unfrequented deserts, or in secret chambers; for their ambiguous performances shrink from investigation, which real miracles have ever challenged. This suffices to convince the judicious Christian, that he ought to disregard them. In whatever way Christ cometh, *light*, not darkness, is his garment: his operations are conspicuous and illustrious: the establishment of his kingdom will illuminate the earth from east to west, and from pole to pole; and wherever the obstinate enemies of his cause are found, there will the executioners of his vengeance be gathered together, with speed and rapacity like the eagle's.

V. 29—35.

Ere long the expected end shall come: then "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, "the stars shall fall from heaven," and nature shall seem to expire in convulsions. The tokens of the Saviour's coming will be perceived; he will come with divine power and glory, in the clouds of heaven: and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn because of him, whom now they despise and disobey. But before he executes his righteous vengeance on his enemies, he will employ his holy angels to gather his elect from every part of the earth as with a sound of a mighty trumpet, that they may "be for ever with the Lord." It is not for us to know the times and seasons of this grand event: but we may easily perceive the tokens of our own approaching dissolution. Within the space of thirty, or forty years, or in a far shorter time, the writer and most of the readers, of these

which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom.

• Luke 13: 2 et 13 15. h. 12. 13. — 14. 15. 2. Ps. xlv. 9—11. Is. lv. 6. xlii. 4. 5. Mar. i. 14. 20. Luke 9. 34. 35. John iii. 29. 2 Cor. xi. 2. Eph. v. 25—33. Rev. xix. 7. xxi. 2. 9.

observations, will have done with all things here below, and be fixed in an eternal and unchangeable state. Let this thought induce us to attend more diligently to the words of Christ: and whilst we meditate on his declarations concerning those things which accompany salvation, on his promises, his denunciations, and his discoveries of the final event respecting the righteous and the wicked; let us still recollect, that "heaven and earth shall pass away, but his word shall not pass away."

V. 36—51.

After all the warnings and instructions of heavenly wisdom, men in general copy the example of the unbelievers in the days of Noah: they eat and drink, plant and build, marry and are given in marriage; and act in every respect as if this world were all, or as if they were to live here for ever. Thus death and judgment come upon them unawares, and with as terrible a surprise, as the deluge came upon the inhabitants of the old world: and then, too late, they wish to be with the believer in his derided ark. Even from the same families and religious societies, death is continually taking one to heaven, and another to hell. Men labour and live together, nay, they associate in the same acts of worship; yet they are the subjects of two opposite kingdoms: and at death they are removed to the capital, so to speak, of that kingdom to which they belong. As we therefore know that our Lord will speedily come to take us hence, but cannot know when, or how soon, let us watch and be sober. To us, at least, "the end of all things is at hand;" and as we should be overwhelmed with confusion, if found, at the solemn season, indulging sloth or sinful inclinations, or in the place of fashionable dissipation; but should wish to be found in the path of duty, or pouring out our hearts in prayer; so let us never venture on the former, or neglect the latter. "We are not in darkness, that that day should overtake us, as a thief;" therefore, let us as the children of the light be always expecting the coming of our Lord. Above all, the stewards of the Lord's household should continually be looking to him, to make them wise, faithful, and assiduous in their work; and to enable them to avoid all interested or ambitious pursuits, or worldly pleasures, and even all literary trifles, that they may wholly give up themselves to their most important work. Blessed will that servant be, however neglected or despised in this vain world, "whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing;" for he will delight to honour that servant, whose pleasure it was to do his Master's work and seek his glory. But wo be to the presumptuous infidel, the mercenary hireling, the lordly oppressor, or the voluptuous sensualist, in the garb of a priest! The Lord of that evil servant will come in a day, when he looketh not for him; and what good will all his preferences, distinctions, and enjoyments do him when God shall cut him off, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; where "shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth?"

14 ¶ For the kingdom of heaven is ^a as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, ^c and delivered unto them his goods.

15 And unto one he gave five ^f talents, to another two, and to another one: to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

16 Then he that had received the five talents ^e went and traded with the same, and made *them* other five talents.

17 And likewise he that *had received* two, ^b he also gained other two.

18 But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, ⁱ and hid his lord's money.

19 After ^k a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

20 And so he that had received five talents came, and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: ^m behold, I have gained besides them five talents more.

21 His lord said unto him, ⁿ Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant; ^o thou hast been faithful over a few things, ^p I will make thee ruler over many things: ^q enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

22 He also that had received two talents came, and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, ^r I have gained two other talents besides them.

23 His lord said unto him, ^r Well done, good and faithful servant; ^s thou hast been faithful over a few things, ^t I will make thee ruler over many things: ^u enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

24 And so he that had received five talents came, and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: ^m behold, I have gained besides them five talents more.

25 His lord said unto him, ⁿ Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant; ^o thou hast been faithful over a few things, ^p I will make thee ruler over many things: ^q enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

26 He also that had received two talents came, and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, ^r I have gained two other talents besides them.

27 His lord said unto him, ^r Well done, good and faithful servant; ^s thou hast been faithful over a few things, ^t I will make thee ruler over many things: ^u enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

28 And so he that had received five talents came, and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: ^m behold, I have gained besides them five talents more.

29 His lord said unto him, ⁿ Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant; ^o thou hast been faithful over a few things, ^p I will make thee ruler over many things: ^q enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

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32 And so he that had received five talents came, and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: ^m behold, I have gained besides them five talents more.

33 His lord said unto him, ⁿ Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant; ^o thou hast been faithful over a few things, ^p I will make thee ruler over many things: ^q enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

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36 And so he that had received five talents came, and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: ^m behold, I have gained besides them five talents more.

m Luke xix. 16, 17, Acts xxviii. 1. Cor. x. 16. Col. i. 29. 2 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Cor. xxi. 10. 21. Luke xvi. 12. Rom. ii. 29. 1 Cor. iv. 3. 21. 1 Pet. i. 7. o 34-40. x. 40-42. xiv. 47. Luke xii. 44. xxi. 28-30. Rev. ii. 10. 26-28. iii. 21. xxi. 7. p 23. Ps. xvi. 10. 11. John xii. 28. xiv. 3. xvi. 24. Phil. i. 23. 2 Tim. ii. 12. Heb. xii. 2. 1 Pet. i. 6. Rev. vii. 17. q Luke xix. 16, 17. Rom. xii. 6-8. 2 Cor. viii. 1-3. 7. 8. 12. r 21. Mark xii. 41-44. xiv. 6. 3.

was denied admission, and disowned by the Bridegroom, as persons with whom he had no acquaintance. Our Lord then made the same application of it, that he had before done of the subject in the former chapter. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 14-18. The kingdom of heaven in this respect may likewise be represented by a man, about to take a journey into a distant country, and intrusting his servants with certain portions of property, to be employed by them as his agents. Christ, as ascended into heaven in due season to return to judge the world, is this Master: professed Christians are his servants: the talents, (which were of great value) represent the powers of body and mind; natural or acquired abilities; time, health, influence, authority, wealth; gifts, privileges, or offices in the Church; in short, every thing of which a good or bad use may be made. It cannot be supposed, consistently with Scripture, that the improvement of natural powers by unregenerate men can entitle them to regenerating grace: for, all unregenerate men are carnal and "alienated from God;" and therefore wholly *indisposed* and *unwilling* to improve their natural powers, according to their bounden duty. But the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, producing a holy judgment and heart, teach, incline, and enable a man to make a good use of all other things: so that this improvement of talent doth not *make men Christians*, but *evidence that they are made such* by the new-creating grace of God; whilst the contrary conduct evinces the hypocrisy of a man's professed faith in Christ.—The five talents given to one servant, the two to the second, and the one to the third, represent the different proportions in which the great Head of the Church, and Lord of the universe, intrusts his servants with various advantages, as it seemeth good in his sight. The expression "according to his several ability," may denote, that every man hath that portion which best suits the station intended for him in the Church and in the community; and which would suffice, if made a good use of, to prove him a use-

ful, honourable, and accepted servant. We must not conclude, from what follows, that they who receive most, are generally the most faithful: for the contrary is very commonly the case, and the Scripture teaches us to expect that it would be so. But our Lord thus shows, that an account must be rendered of the weakest abilities and smallest advantages, as well as of those that are more eminent and distinguishing: and that it will be no excuse for a man to plead, he had but little intrusted to him, if he neglects to make a good use of that little: for, the conduct of the servant that buried his talent, represents the character of formalists and hypocrites, who make no good use of their abilities, opportunities, and advantages; who neglect the duties of their stations; who live to themselves, and are engaged in earthly pursuits; who deem it enough not to do positive mischief; and who are destitute of zeal and love, and actuated by envy, discontent, and selfish passions. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 19-23. "After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." Unbelievers either conclude that Christ will never come to judgment, or that event appears to them so doubtful and distant, that it has no influence on their conduct: and believers have "need of patience, that after they have done the will of God they may receive the promise."—The first servant being called, came and stated that he had traded successfully with his five talents, and had doubled the sum. This represents the humble and thankful consciousness, with which the true Christian will at length reflect on the labours of faith and love, in which he has employed his time, abilities, and providential advantages, in the service of Christ and his Church, and which are the infallible evidences of his sincerity. Accordingly the Master warmly commended this "good and faithful servant;" and assured him of advancement to a post of far higher rank and authority, with immediate admission into "the joy of his lord," as prepared for his friends, and resembling his own felicity. This doubtless relates to

a. vii. 31. Luke

x. xxi. 1. Job. xxi.

11. 15. 16. 18. 19.

Jer. xxi. 6. 18.

Ez. vi. 11. 23. 26.

Mal. i. 1. 13. 14.

14. 15. Luke x.

23. xix. 20.

Rom. xii. 7. 18.

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11. 2 Sam. vi. 9. 10.

1. 1. 1. 1. Rom. vi.

vii. 15. 2 T. m.

1. 6. 7. Rev. xxi.

1. 8.

x. xviii. 32. Job

xv. 3. 6.

y. Luke xix. 22.

23. Rom. iii. 19.

Jude 15.

z. Deut. xxiii. 19.

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a. Luke x. 42. xix.

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24 Then he which had received the one talent came, and said, ' Lord, ' I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed :

25 And I ' was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth ; lo, there thou hast that is thine.

26 His Lord answered and said unto him, ' Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed :

27 Thou ' oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own ' with usury.

28 Take ' therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

29 For ' unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance ; but from him that hath not, ' shall be taken away even that which he hath.

30 And ' cast ye the unprofitable servant into ' outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

31 ¶ When ' the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, ' then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory :

32 And ' before him shall be gathered all nations ; and ' he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats :

33 And he shall set ' the sheep on ' his right hand, but the goats on the left.

x. xii. 12. Mark

14. 23. Luke xii.

11. xvi. 9. 12.

xx. 40. 20. 20.

c. xxi. 4. 1. 1. 1.

6. Ez. xxx. 11.

Hos. vi. 9. 10.

xii. 10. 2. x. 1.

1. 3. 10. 25.

John x. 42.

Rev. vi. 17.

d. iii. 10. 1. 12.

Jer. xvi. 12. Ez.

xv. 2. 5. 10.

xiv. 34. 35. 10.

xv. 6. 7. 11. 14.

Hos. vi. 1. 2.

Rev. vi. 1. 2.

c. xii. 12. x. 42.

50. xxi. 13. 15.

5. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1.

2. Pet. i. 17. Jude

13. Rev. x. 1. 8.

18. xvi. 27. x. 1.

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Dan. vi. 13. 14.

Zech. xiv. 5.

Mark xvi. 38.

x. 42. Luke x.

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the final happiness of believers. Faithfulness, in a lower condition, is indeed often here recompensed by advancement to a higher and more honourable service : but hereafter true Christians shall be made kings and priests unto God, and shall reign with their divine Redeemer in glory and joy inexpressible and inconceivable. (*Marg. Ref.*) The case of the servant who had received two talents, and the gracious acceptance and recompense which he met with, exactly correspond with the other ; and we are thus taught, that inferior endowments and advantages, when faithfully improved, will be as graciously accepted as those which are greater.

V. 24—30. The servant that had received one talent and had hid it in the earth, gave a widely different account of his motives and conduct, and met with a very different reception. He pretended that he knew his lord to be a hard and unreasonable master, who expected more than his servants could perform, or than he had given them the means of effecting ; being like a man, who should expect to reap where he had not sown. Being, therefore, afraid of any miscarriage, should he attempt to trade with the money, he had concealed it in the earth : and though it was not increased, yet it was not wasted. This represents the very heart of many decent and plausible hypocrites, and the reasons of their slothfulness. They are carnally minded, and at enmity with the holy character and law of God ; they murmur against his providence, sovereignty, and method of salvation ; they disbelieve his promises, suppose his service to be perilous, unprofitable, and detrimental ; they complain that he requires more than they are capable of performing, and that he punishes men for what they cannot help ; they pervert the doctrines of Revelation to support these conclusions, and confound the want of inclination to what is good, with a want of natural ability. Thus they excuse their sloth and selfishness, and cast the blame of their misconduct on the Lord ; and they suppose their unfruitfulness to be justifiable, because they are not outwardly so atrocious as some other persons.

—To these vile insinuations of this servant, his lord answered, that if the case had been as he pretended, he might and ought to have put out his money on good security, that some increase might have been made of it ; and therefore he was, by his own confession, a “ wicked and slothful servant.” This shows that such men will be condemned out of their own mouths ; as conscious that they might have done better if they would ; they will therefore be left without excuse, and will as certainly be condemned for sloth and negligence, as others will be for open infidelity, impiety, or profligacy. His lord then ordered the talent to be taken from him, and given to him that had ten talents ; on which Christ observed, as he had done before, (*Note*, xiii. 12 ;) that it was the rule of his kingdom, to give more and more to every man that hath faith and grace, in order that he might be greatly enriched ; but that from all others, those things would be taken away which they had not improved, and they would be left under condemnation even like this unprofitable servant, who was ordered to be cast into outer darkness, misery, and despair. (*Notes*, Luke xix. 11—27.)

V. 31—33. (*Marg. Ref.*) In order more fully to explain and confirm the foregoing parabolical representations, our Lord next spake one of the most interesting and sublime passages, which we meet with even in the holy Scriptures : and it is wonderful, that any person can read it, and yet suppose the Speaker to be no more than man ; when there is such a divine authority and dignity in it, as, we may venture to say, could never with propriety have been assumed by any mere creature, however exalted. Having previously drawn the attention of the disciples to the great season of retribution, he here spake of it in the character of the sovereign Judge. The time will come when the Son of man, even he who appeared in human nature, will be manifested in his divine glory, attended by all the holy angels as his servants and worshippers : and then he will sit upon the throne of his glory, as the Judge of the world. On this grand and awful occasion will be

11 Then shall he say also unto ^a them on the left hand, ^b Depart from me, ^c ye cursed, into ^d everlasting fire, ^e prepared for the devil and his angels:

12 For ^k I was ^{an} hungry, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

13 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

14 Then shall they also answer him,

15 saying, Lord, ¹ when saw we thee an-
hungered, or a thirst, or a stranger, and
naked, or sick, or in prison, and did
not minister unto thee?

16 Then shall he answer them, saying,
Verily I say unto you, ^m inasmuch as ye
did it not to one of the least of these, ye
did it not to me.

17 And these shall go away into ⁿ ever-
lasting punishment: but ^o the righteous
into life eternal.

18 And the Lord Jesus said, ^p I have
sent you forth as sheep in the midst of
wolves: therefore be ye wise as serpents,
and harmless as doves.

19 And he said unto them, ^q Whosoever
will be first, shall be last, and who-
soever will be last, shall be first.

20 And he said unto them, ^r Whosoever
wishes to be great, shall be your servant.

21 And he said unto them, ^s Whosoever
wishes to be great, shall be your servant.

22 And he said unto them, ^t Whosoever
wishes to be great, shall be your servant.

23 And he said unto them, ^u Whosoever
wishes to be great, shall be your servant.

24 And he said unto them, ^v Whosoever
wishes to be great, shall be your servant.

25 And he said unto them, ^w Whosoever
wishes to be great, shall be your servant.

26 And he said unto them, ^x Whosoever
wishes to be great, shall be your servant.

27 And he said unto them, ^y Whosoever
wishes to be great, shall be your servant.

28 And he said unto them, ^z Whosoever
wishes to be great, shall be your servant.

29 And he said unto them, ^{aa} Whosoever
wishes to be great, shall be your servant.

30 And he said unto them, ^{ab} Whosoever
wishes to be great, shall be your servant.

11 Then shall he say also unto ^a them
on the left hand, ^b Depart from me, ^c ye
cursed, into ^d everlasting fire, ^e prepared
for the devil and his angels:

12 For ^k I was ^{an} hungry, and ye
gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye
gave me no drink:

13 I was a stranger, and ye took me
not in: naked, and ye clothed me not:
sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

14 Then shall they also answer him,

15 saying, Lord, ¹ when saw we thee an-
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soever will be last, shall be first.

20 And he said unto them, ^r Whosoever
wishes to be great, shall be your servant.

21 And he said unto them, ^s Whosoever
wishes to be great, shall be your servant.

22 And he said unto them, ^t Whosoever
wishes to be great, shall be your servant.

23 And he said unto them, ^u Whosoever
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24 And he said unto them, ^v Whosoever
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29 And he said unto them, ^{aa} Whosoever
wishes to be great, shall be your servant.

of ostentation, or to compensate for indulged iniquities, or to atone for former sins: for these things would prove him an absolute stranger to true faith, and every evangelical principle of obedience. So that these actions will be produced, as evidences of the excellency and efficacy of justifying faith and the love of Christ; of a person's having been a real believer, and not a mere professor; and to show that there is a propriety in the Lord's honouring him in heaven, who thus proved himself his zealous friend on earth. Even the poorest Christian manifests the same spirit of love to Christ, by kind actions to his brethren, and to all men for the Lord's sake; which will be made known at the great decisive day, as the evidences of his living faith, though not so proper to be adduced in this concise and sublime description.

V. 41—46. The Judge next shows the awful reverse. He declares, that he will address all those on his left hand as "cursed," lying under the curse of the broken law, strangers to the blessings of the Gospel, and justly deserving of the final wrath and vengeance of God: he will bid them "depart from him," the only Author of salvation to sinners, and the Fountain of life and felicity to all creatures; for many of them had in their hearts bid him "depart from them, as they desired not the knowledge of his ways." He will doom them "to fire," the dreadful emblem of the wrath of God, as causing the most excruciating pain of which we have any conception. This fire will be *everlasting* and unquenchable; which would be an unmeaning addition, if the wicked were not to continue in it eternally. It was indeed prepared originally for "the devil and his angels," those first apostates from, and rebels against, God; but as the wicked held with them, and would not separate from their service, it must be their portion also. No doubt impenitent sinners of every age and nation will then be judged; but they are chiefly concerned, to whom the Scriptures are sent; and therefore our Lord represents nothing more, than the ground on which false professors of Christianity will be condemned. It will then be proved against them all, that they had no love to Christ, and therefore no true faith in him; seeing they refused to relieve him, when they saw him in necessity and distress, and had ability and opportunity of doing it. These will be as ready to deny, or palliate, their guilt, as the others to disclaim all merit in their services: but the Judge will prove his charge and stop their mouths, by showing their selfish neglect of his poor disciples, and their refusal to relieve them in their distresses. This alone

will be sufficient to evince that they were unbelievers, even if no injustice, secret licentiousness, or other gross wickedness should be adduced against them. Being therefore demonstrated to be under the condemnation of the law, and entitled to no benefit from the Gospel; nay, exposed to deeper condemnation for their neglect of it, or their hypocrisy and abuse of their privileges; they will be left without plea, or power of resistance or escape, and be constrained to go away into *everlasting punishment*, whilst the righteous will be received into *everlasting life* and felicity.

The original word is the same in both clauses, and he must be blinded indeed by Satan, who will risk his soul on interpreting the same word *temporary* in one clause, and *eternal* in another, of the same verse: and if the *punishment* be *eternal*, there can be no place for annihilation, or for final restitution.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—13.

It is most important for us all continually to be reminded of death and judgment, and of that discrimination of characters which will soon be made. Not only immense multitudes of infidels, profligates, pharisees, and apostates, are thronging the broad road to destruction; and even a large proportion of those that appear to be the followers of Christ, and are externally admitted to the communion of the saints, will be found *foolish virgins*; having indeed the lamp in their hands, but no grace in their hearts. With what seriousness, diligence, and fervent prayer, should we then "examine ourselves whether we be in the faith," or not! How afraid of being deceived, where so much is at stake, and so many come short of eternal life! How earnestly should we seek for heavenly wisdom, and desire to be found upright in the sight of God, rather than be approved by our ill-judging fellow-sinners! It is indeed to be lamented, that whilst the heavenly Bridegroom tarries, even the true Christians are too apt to be drowsy and inattentive: yet, notwithstanding all defects on the one hand, and all fair appearances on the other, there is an essential difference between the weakest believer and the most specious hypocrite. This sometimes appears even here: the unexpected summons of death may throw the Christian into an alarm: but, proceeding without delay to trim his lamp, the grace that before lay almost dormant often shines forth more bright; and his serious self-examination and fervent prayer bring humility, faith, hope, patience, love, and

CHAP. XXVI.

Jesus foretells his crucifixion within two days, 1, 2. The chief priests conspire against him, 3—5. A woman pours precious ointment on his head: the disciples censure, but Jesus commends, her, 6—13. Judas bargains to betray him,

14—16. Jesus eats the passover, and marks out the traitor, 17—25. He institutes the Lord's supper, 26—29; and foretells, that they all would forsake, and Peter deny, him, 30—35. His agony and prayer in the garden, 36—46. He is betrayed and apprehended, 47—50. A disciple cuts off the high priest's ser-

every holy affection into lively exercise; so that all around him, perceive him to be ready, and "meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light." On the other hand the mere professor, in such circumstances, often detects his consciousness of hypocrisy, and impresses the minds of beholders with a gloomy fear, that "his lamp is going out," and about to be extinguished in utter darkness. We may compassionate such persons, but we can give them little help: we should direct them to him, who sells all the blessings of salvation "without money and without price;" but the hour is unseasonable, and the time is short; nor can they well know that their prayers are not mere selfishness, and their repentance constrained and insincere. How dreadful then will be the case of those who do not seek "the things which accompany salvation," till the time is past! or knock till the door is finally closed! But, however it may appear at death, assuredly no one will partake of the marriage-supper of the Lamb, who has not in this world washed his robes, and made them white in his atoning blood, and who is not a partaker of his sanctifying Spirit. Let us then make no delay, but be earnest in our preparation for the feast; and let us ever be upon our watch, for "we know not either the day, or the hour when our Lord cometh."

V. 14—30.

In some respects "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man travelling into a far country, and delivering his goods unto his own servants." Whatever any one possesses, is intrusted to him by the great Lord of all, who will at length call him to an account for the use made of it. The holy law requires us to devote the whole in perfect love, to the service of God and to the benefit of our neighbour; and denounces its awful curse on every one, who in any instance, or at any time, fails of so doing: but the Gospel inwardly teaches and disposes the true believer, to attempt this sincerely, though feebly, from the time when he begins to experience "the joy of God's salvation." He believes his word, respecting the future judgment and its important consequences; and he gives implicit credit to his promises and threatenings. By faith he perceives his danger as a sinner, and fears and flees from it; and at the same time he discovers his Refuge, and in hope repairs to it. Having obtained peace with God, and peace of conscience, through the atoning blood of Christ; his "faith works by love," and his language is "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?" This humble love and gratitude, uniting with hatred of sin, contempt of the world, love to the brethren, and compassion for perishing sinners, impels him, to devote

himself, and all his abilities and advantages, to the service of Christ; and to do good in his Church and the world, according to his opportunity, and in exact proportion to the vigour of his faith and hope. This obedience distinguishes the real disciple of Christ from every other man: the self-righteous Pharisee, the self-wise infidel, the careless sinner, the formal professor of the Gospel, are alike unacquainted with these evangelical principles of devoted diligence in the service of a crucified Saviour. It is the real Christian's liberty, privilege, honour, interest, and satisfaction, to be employed as the Redeemer's servant, and as his instrument in promoting his glory and the benefit of his people: and "the love of Christ even constrains him to live no longer to himself, but to him that died for him, and rose again." According to the number of his talents, he will become a blessing to others, by his example, influence, conversation, and labours; by the use which he makes of his time, money, and abilities; by his relative conduct in his family; and by serving the Lord, as a minister, magistrate, or private Christian: and whether he hath had five talents, two, one, or only a small portion of one; "he will not be ashamed, but have confidence before Christ at his coming." Nay, he may now humbly rejoice in the testimony of his conscience; and, giving the Lord all the glory, he may look forward to death and judgment, assured of being then received, with, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Let us not then be weary of well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. But let every one dread the doom of the unprofitable servant: for, it is not enough, that men do not spend their Lord's goods upon their lusts, or waste their time and talents in sin; even they who bury them in the earth will be left without excuse. Whatever they may pretend, they dislike the character and work of the Lord; they count his service irksome and unprofitable; they dare not trust his promise, and they are dissatisfied with his providence; and because they may not have the pre-eminence, or take the lead and manage things in their own way, they sit down in sullen discontent; and will do nothing, because they cannot do every thing. But many of those excuses and objections, which pass current here, will be refuted and silenced at last: and every unfruitful professor will be condemned out of his own mouth, and consigned to "outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth." For whatever else men may possess, who are destitute of sanctifying grace; they will soon be deprived of it, and only have the additional condemnation of having been ungrateful for so many mercies. But the most indigent believer is rich.

¹⁴ ¶ Then ^b one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,

¹⁵ And said *unto them*, ^a What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for ^c thirty pieces of silver.

¹⁶ And from that time ^f he sought opportunity to betray him.

¹⁷ ¶ Now, ^g the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, ^b Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?

¹⁸ And he said, ⁱ Go into the city to

such a man, and say unto him, ^k The Master saith, ^l my time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.

¹⁹ And ^m the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; ⁿ and they made ready the passover.

²⁰ ¶ Now, ^o when the even was come, ^p he sat down with the twelve.

²¹ And as they did eat, he said, ^q Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

²² And ^r they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

acceptable work, in thus honouring him by such means as were in her power, when others were about to insult and despise him? They would always have poor persons, whom they might relieve whenever they would: but his personal presence was not long to be continued with them. And though Mary knew it not, yet he was about to be put to death, and this might be regarded as the anointing for his burial; performed a little before-hand, (for they would have no opportunity of performing it afterwards,) in which last expenses, as a testimony of respect to beloved friends, men were not used to be penurious. He further assured the disciples, that this action was so acceptable to him, that he would take care it should be reported, as a memorial of her faith and love, to all future ages, and in all places where his Gospel should be preached. This may be considered as a prophecy: he would influence the evangelists to record this incident, which might appear trivial among the important actions of his public life; and take care that it should never be erased, to the end of time. *Me ye have not always.* 'These words destroy the doctrine of transubstantiation: for if Christ were, as to soul, body, and divinity, truly in the host; that, being always present with them of Rome, they would have Christ always with them.' (*Whitby.*)

V. 14—16. Judas, notwithstanding his plausible conduct and apostolical office, was a hypocrite, and a covetous dishonest man. Knowing, therefore, that the chief priests and rulers wanted to get Jesus into their hands without disturbance, he framed the design of conducting their officers to him in the absence of the people. Probably he hoped to ingratiate himself, and to obtain further advantages, beyond the present recompense. Perhaps he expected that Jesus would miraculously liberate himself, and so no bad consequence would ensue from his treachery. The reproof implied in our Lord's commendation of the woman's conduct, which from vile motives he had condemned, seems also to have exasperated him; and thus Satan found access, to hurry him forward to the execution of his base design. Accordingly he obtained admission to the chief priests, and proposed to betray his Master to them, demanding what they would give him for that service? and they, (loving the treachery, though they probably spied and detested the traitor,) offered him thirty pieces of silver, supposed to have been shekels, in value

about 3*l.* 15*s.* This was the sum appointed by the law to be paid for a slave that had been slain by accident. (*Marg. Ref.*) 'So true is that of St. Paul, that Christ took on him the form of a servant.' (*Hammond.*) But though the sum was so paltry, yet Judas bargained to take it, and thenceforth watched for an opportunity to betray him!

V. 17—19. The person here mentioned was probably a concealed friend and disciple of Christ, who he knew would be glad to accommodate him and his apostles. — Christ points out a certain person, as known to him, whose name and house he does not mention to the disciples; but divinely foretells, that he would be discovered to them, by the events which they would meet with as they entered the city. This was done in order to convince the disciples more and more clearly, that nothing would happen to their Lord by chance; but that he had the most exact foreknowledge of every minute circumstance. Thus they would be confirmed, by this example of divine providence, against the great offence of his cross. (*Besa.*)

V. 20. (*Notes, Mark xiv. 12—16.*) (*Marg. Ref.*) Without doubt our Lord ate the Passover at the time which was appointed by the law, and which was customary among the Jews. (*Notes, Ex. xii. 3—10.*) St. Mark says expressly, "when they killed the passover;" and St. Luke, "when the passover must be killed." (*Marg. Ref.*) The passover was celebrated at the close of the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, and just when the fifteenth day began; for the Jews reckoned from evening to evening. "The first day of unleavened bread," strictly speaking, began at the very time when the Jews were eating the paschal lamb: but in a more general sense, the whole fourteenth day, in which among other preparations for the passover, leaven was put out of their houses, might be so called. (*Note, Ex. xii. 15—20.*) — It is a very remarkable circumstance, that our Saviour was crucified, and our deliverance from the bondage of sin completed, in the same month, and on the same day of the month, that the Israelites were delivered from the bondage of Egypt, by their departure from that land. For the Israelites went out of Egypt, and Christ was put to death, on the fifteenth day of the month Nisan. (*Bp. Porteus.*)

Pe xlii 9 Luke
xxii. 21. John
xiii. 18 26-29
454 26 Gen. ii.
15. Pe xxii. 1-
21. xxv. 1-21
Is i 5 6 lii.
Dan. ix. 26.
26-28 x. i. 10
[xiii.] 7 Mark ix.
12 Luke xxiv.
45 25 46. John
xiii. 21. 24 36
37 Acts xiii. 27
1-22 xvii. 2 3.
xxv. 1. 22 39
xxvi. 23. 1 Cor.
xv. 3. 1 Pet. i. 12.
2 Luke xxii. 52.
Acts ii. 23. 35
28
3 xvii. 7 xxvii.
3-5. 14. 15. 23
3-5. Prov. xxv. 20.

23 And he answered and said, ' He that dippeth *his* hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

24 The 'Son of man goeth, as it is written of him; * but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

25 Then ^v Judas, which betrayed him, answered, and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, * Thou hast said.

3-5. 14. 15. 23. cix 6-14. Mark xiv. 21. John xvi. 12. Acts i 16-20 — y 2 Kings 23-25. Prov. xxv. 20. — z 64 xxvii. 11 John xviii. 37.

V. 21-24. When the two disciples had made all ready, at the usual time in the evening, Jesus, and the apostles who were with him, went to the house which he had marked out. 'He seems not to have gone to Jerusalem that morning: so that it is probable he spent most 'of the day in retirement for meditation and prayer.' (*Doddridge*.) While they were celebrating the passover, our Lord assured the disciples, that one of them would betray him into the hand of his enemies. Thus he gave Judas to understand that he was acquainted with his conduct, and prepared the minds of the others. This declaration, however, greatly troubled them. It does not appear, that any of them suspected Judas; they had no reason to suspect each other; they could not suppose that Christ suspected them groundlessly; and though not apt to think themselves capable of so base and ungrateful a treachery, they yet put the question severally respecting themselves, as anxious to be assured that they were not intended. Our Lord therefore gave a general intimation of the traitor, by observing that he was one who dipped with him in the dish: probably others of them did this from time to time, but Judas might be doing so at that instant: this, however, was intended to expose the baseness of his conduct, as well as to mark him out to the disciples; and afterwards, (I apprehend,) he distinguished him more plainly, by giving him a sop. To this he added, that indeed the Messiah was about to be taken off by a violent death, and that nothing would take place, but what had been determined and predicted concerning him: yet that would by no means excuse the traitor's conduct, or lessen the severity of his punishment; for he would be doomed to such misery in another world, that it would have been good for him if he had never been born. This could not have been the case, if he would ever be liberated from punishment, and made partaker of eternal happiness; for that would infinitely overbalance all possible temporary suffering, whatever its acuteness and continuance might be; and would therefore prove his existence upon the whole to be an invaluable blessing. 'The prediction of this event, that Jesus should suffer, and by the treachery of Judas, did lay on Judas no antecedent necessity of doing this action; because it did not lessen the *due* to him for it; but only doth suppose in God a knowledge how the will of man, left to his own freedom, will determine or incline itself.' (*Whitby*.) Surely, it implies also, that God determined to leave Judas to himself: and if this foreknowledge and predetermination did

26 ¶ And ^a as they were eating, ^b Jesus took bread, and * blessed it, ^c and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, ^d Take, eat; ^e this is my body.

27 And ^f he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ^g Drink ye all of it:

28 For this is ^h my blood of the New Testament, which is ⁱ shed for many for the remission of sins.

g Pe xvi. 13. Cant. v. 1 vii. 9. Is. xxv. 6. lv. 1. 1 Cor. x. 16 xi. 28 — h * xxi. 7, 8. Lev. xvi. 11. Jer. xxxi. 31. Zech. ix. 11. Mark x. 24 Luke xxi. 20 1 Cor. x. 16. Heb. ix. 14-22 x. 4-14 xii. 28 — i xx. 28 Rom. v. 15 19 Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14. 20. Heb. ix. 22 28 1 John ii. 2 Rev. vii. 9 14.

not interfere with Judas's free agency and accountability, it does not appear, how any foreknowledge and predetermination to leave men to themselves, can interfere with their free agency and accountability. It is wonderful that thinking persons do not see that the whole system of prophecy is a direct and full confutation of all objections, *on this ground*, against the doctrine of predestination! The predicted events cannot possibly fail of accomplishment: they must therefore either be absolutely decreed by the all wise God, or there must be some necessity which cannot be overcome. The first is *Christian predestination*, the latter is *heathen fatalism*; but neither interferes with man's free agency and accountability, for he still acts voluntarily, according to the prevailing inclinations of his heart.

V. 25. At length Judas also inquired, whether he were the person? He probably feared, that his silence would excite suspicion, or he meant to face the matter out, as if unconscious of guilt. The answer of our Lord plainly meant, that he was the traitor: yet neither the awful sentence denounced on him, nor this additional proof of Christ's knowledge of his heart, had any effect, to prevent him from rushing headlong on his own destruction!

V. 26-28. When the paschal lamb had been eaten, the Lord's supper was appointed; for this was substituted to be a *commemorative* ordinance, "without shedding of blood," of redemption already made, as the passover had been a *figurative* ordinance, with shedding of blood, of redemption to be made in the fulness of time. Nothing can be more simple in its nature and use, than this sacred institution; yet nothing hath ever been more obscured, perplexed, misunderstood, and perverted, than it hath been. Our Lord, just before his death, took bread, and blessed it, with praise and thanksgiving: this he set apart for a sacred purpose, as the representation of his body; and he brake it, to show that his body would be wounded, put to great torture, and undergo death, as the sacrifice for sins. He then gave it to his disciples, that each of them might eat of it, as an outward expression of their receiving the atonement of his death, and in remembrance of his love and sufferings for them. In like manner he took the cup, and having blessed it, and given thanks as before, he gave it to them, and bade them all drink of it; for the wine in that cup represented his blood, as shed to make way for the new covenant; and to ratify it, as valid for their benefit; and especially to atone for their sins, and those of many, even of all of them that should believe in

1. P. 10. 2. 10.
11. 15. 16. 17. 18.
11. 16. 17. 18. 19.
11. 16. 17. 18. 19.

29 But I say unto you, ¹ I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine.

¹ until that day when I drink it new 1. X. vi. 30. X. vi. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

his name; in order that they might obtain remission of them. The language which our Lord used, in instituting this ordinance, is manifestly *figurative*, and cannot admit of a *literal* interpretation; unless any will say, that the *cup* was literally the blood of Christ, or the new covenant: and this renders it the more wonderful, that any set of men should be so adventurous and absurd, as to require the Church to believe, in contradiction to their senses and understandings, that the bread in the sacrament, after consecration, becomes the real entire living body of Christ, together with his Deity, and therefore a proper object of divine adoration. (*Marg. Ref.*) Indeed the Scripture gives no intimation of any peculiar mystery, or even difficulty, in this institution. By comparing the several Scriptures, which relate to this subject, it appears, that our Lord commanded his disciples to meet together in his name; and with prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, to break, distribute, and eat bread, which is the most salutary and universal of all these viands by which life is sustained; and to pour out and drink wine, the most valuable and refreshing of all cordials. This action was to be performed in remembrance of him, and of his love and his sufferings for them; and as a representation of his body broken, and his blood shed for their sins, in order to purchase the blessings of the new covenant; and of the method by which they were made partakers of this salvation, even by receiving and feeding upon him, in their hearts by faith with thanksgiving.² By his body and blood we are doubtless to understand his human nature, as joined in personal union with the divine: and the separation of the blood from the body, which was the immediate cause of his death, must be understood to include all his expiatory sufferings. The holiness and dignity of the Redeemer, the depth of his humiliation and the intenseness of his agonies; the immensity of his compassion and condescension; the deplorable condition from which he redeemed his people; the extensive efficacy of his one oblation; the honour and happiness to which he exalts believers; and the discovery made in that great transaction, of the justice and love of God, the excellency of his law, the evil of sin, the vanity of the world, and the importance of eternal things; require peculiar consideration, when the death of Christ is contemplated through the medium of these outward emblems. The ordinance seems to have been administered to the apostles *sitting*, and *in the evening*; yet no command was given about these things; and therefore the time, place, and posture, must be considered as mere circumstances. The action of communicating seems to imply an open confession of our guilt and ruined state, as justly condemned criminals; who could have no hope of pardon or salvation from any thing we could do of ourselves; a profession of our faith, respecting the Person, undertaking, and atonement of Christ; and the necessity, reality, and suitableness of his sacrifice and vicarious sufferings: an avowed dependence on this atonement, and the mercy of God according to the covenant thus mediated: an acknowledgment of our unspeakable obligations to our gracious Benefactor, who laid down

his life for us: a strong and open expression of our love and gratitude to him; and a sacramental engagement to submit to and obey him, as our beloved Lord and Saviour: and a public joining of ourselves to him and his people, to walk with them in Christian fellowship, in all sacred ordinances, and devotedness to the Redeemer's service. No man can therefore *sincerely* and *intelligently* partake of this ordinance, who is not self-condemned and penitent; who does not believe the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel; who applies not in secret for an interest in the salvation of Christ; who lives in allowed habitual sin, or the neglect of known duty; whose heart is under the dominion of pride, malice, avarice, or any evil propensity; who makes it merely a step to perdition; or a compensation for sin, a covering of his iniquity or infidelity, a self-righteous service, or an excuse for licentiousness: for such men are guilty of the body and blood of Christ. But the humble penitent, the trembling believer, who relies on a crucified Saviour, and longs to live to his glory, should fear no snare in this institution: it is his duty and privilege to come to it, as often as he has opportunity: and he will find it to be admirably suited to increase humility, tenderness of conscience, self-examination, watchfulness, the life of faith, hope, love, gratitude, brotherly affection, and every holy disposition and consolation. These are obvious and intelligible effects of serious and frequent communicating; which show it to be as well suited to strengthen and refresh the soul and its graces, as bread and wine are to nourish and cheer the animal life. They who are not prepared for this ordinance, cannot be fit for death or heaven; nay, acceptable prayer cannot be offered without something of a similar preparation of heart. It hath been much disputed, whether Judas partook of the Lord's supper or not; but it seems not to be of great consequence which way the controversy be decided. If he did, as it seems probable, his presence can give no encouragement to intruders; but rather warns every man previously to examine himself as to the state of his soul: nor can it sanction the admission of openly wicked persons; and no discipline can exclude specious hypocrites. Some persons have endeavoured to prove the Resurrection of Christ to be the *chief doctrine of Christianity*, the belief of which constitutes a man a Christian; but it is in fact rather the grand proof of all other doctrines, and the evidence that the atonement of his death was accepted. The appointment, however, of this ordinance, "to show forth the Lord's death till he come," abundantly evinces the belief of that doctrine to be most essentially distinguishing of a real Christian; and that a reliance on the atonement of Christ, for remission of sins and all the blessings of salvation, and thus spiritually eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, forms the great peculiarity of the life of faith in the Son of God. (*Notes, John vi. 52-58. 1 Cor. x. 15-17. xi. 23-34. Marg. Ref.*) The papists, who refuse the cup to the laity, and give an unbroken wafer instead of broken bread, in these respects also, in effect, disannul our Lord's institution, and substitute another in its place.

with you in my Father's kingdom.
 30 ¶ And ^a when they had sung an
 hymn, ^a they went out into the mount
 of Olives.

31 Then saith Jesus unto them, ^a All
 ye shall be offended because of me this
 night: for it is written, ^a I will smite the
 Shepherd, ^a and the sheep of the flock
 shall be scattered abroad.

32 But after ^a I am risen again, ^a I will
 go before you into Galilee.

33 Peter answered and said unto him,
 Though all men shall be offended be-
 cause of thee, ^a yet will I never be of-
 fended.

34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say
 unto thee, ^a That this night, before the
 cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

35 Peter said unto him, ^a Though I
 should die with thee, yet will I not deny
 thee. ^a Likewise also said all the disci-
 ples.

36 ¶ Then cometh Jesus with them
 unto ^a a place called Gethsemane, and
 saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here,
 while I go and pray yonder.

37 And he took with him ^a Peter and
 the two sons of Zebedee, and began to
 be ^a sorrowful and very heavy.

38 Then saith he unto them, ^a My
 soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto
 death: ^a tarry ye here, and watch with
 me.

39 And he went a little farther, ^a and
 fell on his face, ^a and prayed, saying, ^a O

V. 29. It is not long that I shall abide with you, nor shall I again celebrate this, or any the like feast, among you, till we meet in heaven, and partake of those joys, which are wont to be figuratively expressed by new wine. (*Hanmond.*) 'I will no more, in this mortal state, drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine; but shall reserve myself for a more comfortable draught, sweeter than all the new wine earth can afford, which I shall enjoy in my Father's kingdom, whereof ye shall be blessed partakers with me.' (*Bp. Hall.*) The passover, which was a type of the redemption to be wrought by me, shall be fulfilled and completed by my death and resurrection. The shadow passes away; the substance takes place: and when you eat this supper in remembrance of me, there will I be virtually present amongst you; and your souls shall be nourished and refreshed by my grace, as your bodies are by the bread and wine.' (*Bp. Porteus.*) Wine is the scriptural emblem of gladness: but Christ had done with joy and gladness, till after his resurrection: then the kingdom of the Father would be established; and his gracious presence with his true disciples, in every public or private act of worship, would fill their hearts with joy, and put new songs of praise into their mouths. In this new joy he would share, he would "sup with them" on earth, and at length they should "sup with him" in heaven. (*Rev. iii. 20.*) So that the joy of his disciples in him, and his in them, both in the Church on earth, and in the heavenly state, may be figuratively intended. 'If you inquire, When did Christ thus drink this wine with them? I answer, he did it, not so much by "eating and drinking with his disciples after he arose from the dead;—as by fulfilling the promise made to them; I dispose to you a kingdom, as my Father hath done to me; and ye shall eat and drink with me, at my table in my kingdom." (*Luke xxii. 29, 30.*) for in what sense soever they are here said to drink with him at his table, he must also be said to drink with them.' (*Whitby.*) Our Lord calls the wine, after consecration, "the fruit of the vine."

V. 30—35. After our Lord and the disciples, according

to the custom at the conclusion of the paschal supper, had sung a hymn of praise; (which some think consisted of psalms, from the hundred and thirteenth to the hundred and eighteenth, inclusive, but others suppose to have been composed for the occasion;) he set out with the eleven to go to the mount of Olives; for Judas had previously left them. (*Notes, John xiii—xvii.*) At this time he solemnly assured them, that during the night on which they had already entered, they would all meet with such temptations, as would stagger their faith, and cause them to fall into sin through fear of men; for the prophecy was about to be fulfilled, in which the Lord had declared, that he would smite the Shepherd, and the sheep should be scattered: (*Note, Zech. xiii. 7.*) They might, however, be assured of his resurrection, when he would go before them into Galilee. (*Marg. Ref.*) But Peter, instead of properly noticing this last expression, in an ignorant spirit of self-confidence, (as if he could have proved his Master mistaken, and had been so strong in faith above all other men, that nothing could possibly move him,) declared "that he would never be offended," though that should be the case of all others: upon which our Lord solemnly assured him, that before the usual hour of cock-crowing that very night, and before the cock that he should hear would crow twice, he should thrice deny all knowledge of him. Peter, however, not conscious of any such intention, being honestly and warmly attached to his Lord; not aware of the treachery of his heart, the force of temptation, and the fiery trial that awaited him; and somewhat indignant at being thus suspected, confidently declared, that he would sooner die with him than deny him; in which profession he was joined by the other apostles, who were doubtless unwilling to be outdone in professions of fidelity and cordial attachment. This unwarranted self-confidence was the first step towards Peter's shameful fall. As John relates a similar warning and protestation, previously to the departure of Christ and the disciples from the house where they had eaten the passover, some have supposed that the same circumstances occurred twice: and that this was a second warning, especially to Peter.

1 KXV D. 33 Mark
XVI 22
in KX. 22 John XVII 11.

my Father, 'if it be possible, ' let this

cup pass from me; nevertheless, ' not
as I will, but as thou wilt.

n 2 Sam. Xv 20.
John VI 36. Xix
28 N. 31. Rom.
XV 1-3. Phil.
II 8

V. 36—39. (*Marg. Ref.*) The word *Gethsemane* signifies, the valley of fatness; and this seems to have been a pleasant and fruitful garden, to which Jesus had access, and frequently resorted with his disciples, for retirement, devout conversation, and religious exercises. When he came thither, he was pleased to leave the other apostles at a distance, and to take those only as witnesses of his agony, who had before witnessed his transfiguration. In their presence, "he began to be sorrowful and very heavy;" and he complained, "that his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." The words used on this occasion are the most expressive imaginable, and denote the greatest dejection, amazement, anguish, and horror of mind, that can be conceived: the state of one surrounded with sorrows, overwhelmed with miseries, and almost swallowed up with consternation and dismay. In this frame of mind, he went a little way from the disciples; and first kneeling down, but afterwards prostrating himself on the earth, he prayed to his Father, that, if it were "possible, " that cup might pass from him." Some refer this to the present anguish and horror which he felt in his soul, and not to his approaching crucifixion: but whatever we understand by it, it expressed his strong aversion to suffering, save when the glory of God and the good of man required it; and it showed that he had all the innocent feelings of our nature in the most exquisite degree; that, had it been possible, that is, consistent with the justice, truth, holiness, and mercy of God, to have had his sufferings mitigated or remitted, he would have desired it, as much as we should in similar circumstances: and the retraction in the subsequent clause showed his perfect resignation, and willingness to bear that unspeakable load, which must otherwise have sunk us into everlasting destruction. We find from St. Luke, that when Jesus was at prayer, an angel was sent to encourage and strengthen his mind for the conflict; and that, (though the night was cold,) his whole frame was agitated to such a degree, "that his sweat became as great drops of blood falling to the ground." It therefore occurs here, to inquire into the cause, or causes, of our Lord's agony. He had doubtless a clear and full view of all the sufferings which he was about to undergo, with all their various aggravations: but he had had the same all along; yet he had acted and spoken with the most entire serenity, even to the very moment of this extraordinary scene. Many of his disciples, in different ages, have met the most excruciating tortures, which human, or rather diabolical, cruelty and ingenuity could devise, without any such perturbation, being supported by inward peace, consolation, and joyful hope; and doubtless Christ was as much superior to them all, in fortitude and constancy, as the heavens are above the earth. We must therefore conclude, that there were some ingredients mingled in this cup, which were not in theirs, and some in theirs, which were not in his. To mention the treachery and fate of Judas, or the misconduct of Peter and the other apostles, or the unbelief of the Jews, as causes of this surprising effect, must fail to give the reflecting mind any satisfactory view of the subject. We must also exclude from this case many of those things,

that cause the most exquisite misery to the human mind of which it is capable; for there could be in the mind of the holy Jesus no horrors of a guilty conscience, no conflict of sinful passions, no despair as to the final event of his sufferings. It is not indeed possible for us fully to understand or explain this subject; yet we may point out the light which the Scriptures afford us upon it. Christ sustained the character of our Surety, who undertook to be answerable for our sins: accordingly "our iniquities " were laid upon him," and "he was made sin for us," and "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust;" and the Scripture ascribes his heaviest sufferings to the immediate hand of God, "It pleased the Lord to bruise him," "he made his soul a sacrifice for sin." The sword of divine justice was commanded to "awake against the Shepherd, and smite him;" and "God spared not his " own Son." We may from these and similar Scriptures conclude, that the human nature of Christ was on this occasion left wholly destitute of all consolatory communications from the Holy Spirit, though supported, by its union with the Deity, to endure the unknown anguish without sinking under it; that he had the fullest discovery to his mind of the infinite evil of sin, and of that immensity of guilt which he was to expiate; that he had the most awful view of the divine justice and holiness, and the vengeance deserved by the sins of men; and that such a sense of the divine wrath oppressed his inmost soul, as no tongue can express or imagination conceive. At the same time "he suffered being tempted;" and probably all kind of horrible thoughts were suggested by Satan and his angels, that tended to gloom, despondency, and every other dreadful conclusion; which would be the more intolerable, in proportion to the perfection of his holiness. So that we may be certain he endured as much misery, of the same kind with that of condemned spirits, as could possibly consist with a pure conscience, perfect love of God and man, and an assured confidence of a glorious event. Probably some degree of the same darkness and horror oppressed his mind, during the whole subsequent scene, till on the cross he said, "It is finished." Accordingly we do not read that he vented any complaint about his outward sufferings, but he most dolefully exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Nor is it at all improbable, that his great enemy and ours, the prince of darkness, whom he came to overthrow, and with whom he maintained a constant conflict through life, and triumphed over by his death, should exert his utmost power, by presenting real, or raising up imaginary, terrors, to shake the constancy of his soul, and deter him from the great work he had undertaken. These, and a multitude of other agonizing distresses, unknown and inconceivable to us, which might necessarily spring from so vast, so momentous, so stupendous a work, as the salvation of a whole world, made a plain distinction between our Saviour's situation, and that of any other martyr to the cause of truth; and most clearly prove that there never was a sorrow in every respect like unto his sorrow. (*Rp. Porteus.*)—"Christ dreaded not death in itself, but the wrath of God against

o 43 xxxv.5. Cant.
e 2 Mark xiv.
27. 1 Cor. ix. 32.
xxii. 45.

p 39 July ix 38 i
Esm xxvii. 15
1 Kings xx. 11.

q xxii. 42 xxviii.
Mark xii. 41—
37. 38. Luke
xii. 36. xxii. 40.
45. 1 Cor. xii. 13.

r Pet. ii. 7. 8.
8. Rev. xvi. 15.
e vii. 33. Luke
xiii. 31. 34.

1 Cor. x. 13. 22.
Pet. ii. 9. Rev.
ix. 10.
e Ps. cxxx. 4. 5. 24.

22. 32. 33. 34. 35.
— 119. 173. 174. 181.
xxvi. 8. 9. Rom.
x. 10. 11. 12. 13.

1 Cor. x. 27. Gal.
v. 16. 17. 24. Phil.
ii. 19—24.

1 Cor. ix. 24. xxii. 1. 2.
1 Cor. 1—3. 17. 18.
1 Cor. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

1 The. v. 6—8.
x vi. 7. Dan. ix.
17—19. Luke
xviii. 1. 2 Cor.
xiii. 8.

1 Kings xviii.
27. Ec. xi. 3.
e 2. 11. 15. Mark
xi. 41. 42. Luke
xvii. 31. John
xiii. 1. xvi. 1.

1 Sam. xii. 48.
Luke ix. 51. xli.
62. xli. 15. John
xii. 31. Acts
xvi. 3.

1 Cor. x. 13. 22.
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40 And he cometh unto the disciples.
° and findeth them asleep, and saith unto
Peter, ° What! could ye not watch with
me one hour?

41 ° Watch and pray; that ye ° enter
not into temptation: ° the spirit indeed is
willing, but the flesh is weak.

42 He went away again ° the second
time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if
this cup may not pass away from me, ex-
cept I drink it, thy will be done.

43 And he came and found them asleep
again: ° for their eyes were heavy.

44 And he left them, and went away
again, and ° prayed the third time, saying
the same words.

45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and
saith unto them, ° Sleep on now, and take
your rest: behold, ° the hour is at hand,
and the Son of man is betrayed into the
hands of sinners.

46 Rise, ° let us be going: behold, he
is at hand that doth betray me.

47 ¶ And while he yet spake, ° lo, Judas,
one of the twelve, came, and with him
a great multitude with swords and staves,
from the chief priests and elders of the
people.

48 Now he that betrayed him gave
them a sign, saying, ° Whomsoever I shall
kiss, that same is he; ° hold him fast.

49 And forthwith he came to Jesus,
and said, ° Hail, Master; ° and kissed
him.

50 And Jesus said unto him, ° Friend,
wherefore art thou come? Then came
they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took
him.

51 And, behold, ° one of them which
were with Jesus stretched out his hand,
and drew his sword, and struck a servant
of the high priest's, and smote off his
ear.

52 Then said Jesus unto him, ° Put up
again thy sword into his place: for all
° they that take the sword, shall perish
with the sword.

53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now
pray to my Father, ° and he shall presently
give me more than ° twelve ° legions of
angels?

54 But ° how then shall the scriptures
be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

55 In that same hour said Jesus to the
multitudes, ° Are ye come out, as against
a thief, with swords and staves for to take
me? ° I sat daily with you teaching in the
temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

56 But all this was done, ° that the
scriptures of the prophets might be fulfil-
led. ° Then all the disciples forsook him,
and fled.

° sin, the weight of which for our sakes must be sustained.
(Beza.)

V. 40, 41. Notwithstanding the confidence and pro-
fessions of Peter and his companions, and the injunctions
of Christ in his extreme anguish, that they should watch
with him, they were fallen asleep, when he returned,
which occasioned him to rebuke Peter especially, as if
surprised, that after all he could not “watch with him one
“hour!” He therefore exhorted them to watch and pray,
not so much on his account, as on their own; lest through
neglect and carnal security they should be drawn into cir-
cumstances of peculiar temptation, and overcome by it;
for though being influenced by divine grace, they were
inwardly and sincerely willing and ready to adhere to him,
even to sufferings and death, yet their flesh was weak and
frail, and their natural aversion to, and dread of, pain and
shame, would render them unable to stand their ground in
the time of trial, if they did not depend on and seek for
the powerful assistance of God, to uphold and strengthen
them. Most expositors understand the clause as a *kind*
excuse, which the Lord made for their present conduct;
but he was not used to *excuse* any thing wrong in them;
and their sleeping on this occasion was peculiarly unseason-
able and criminal: it seems therefore more proper to con-
sider the passage as a *caution* respecting the future, and a
warning, that self-confidence and neglect of watching and
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prayer would leave them defenceless in the time of dan-
ger, and that they would fall, notwithstanding their most
sincere and determined resolutions to the contrary. In-
deed, it is evident that Peter's confidence in the willingness
of his spirit, and his overlooking the weakness of the flesh,
occasioned his neglect of means, induced him to thrust
himself into perilous circumstances, and so made way for
his awful fall.—The words are not meant as an excuse,
“or mitigation of their sins,” but as a motive to their prayer
and vigilance.” (Whitby.)

V. 42—46. After this, Christ again left the disciples,
and prayed nearly as before; except that he expressed
more entirely his resignation to the will of the Father, in
respect to the variety and intensity of his sufferings: but
when he came again the second and the third time, he still
found them sleeping; for their very sorrow at what they
witnessed and expected, concurred in rendering them
heavy for sleep. But when he came the third time, he bade
them “sleep on, and take their rest;” that is, if they were
able; for though his agonies and exhortations failed to keep
them awake, there were those coming, who would do it
effectually, as the hour was at hand, which he had so of-
ten foretold, when the Son of Man, the Messiah, was to
be betrayed into the hands of the vilest sinners.

V. 47—56. (Marg. Ref.) Judas is constantly noted
as one of the twelve; for this was the grand aggravation of
2 A

1. Ps. lvi. 5, 6.
Mark xiv. 53.
54. Luke xxi.
55. 2. John vi.
12-14.
24.

57 And they that had laid hold on Jesus, led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

n. John xviii. 15.

1. Ps. lvi. 5, 6.
Mark xiv. 53.
54. Luke xxi.
55. 2. John vi.
12-14.
24.

58 But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants to see the end.

59 Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;

60 But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses,

61 And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

62 And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?

c. xxvii. 12-14. Mark xiv. 60. Luke xxi. 2. John xxi. 12-14. xxi. 2-11.

his guilt. He had by this time got all things ready for the execution of his base purpose; and knowing the place of Christ's retirement, he led thither an armed multitude from the chief priests and rulers, who were also attended by some of the principal persons themselves. It is probable that our Lord had been accustomed to welcome the disciples in the most condescending and affectionate manner, by allowing them to kiss him, when they returned from any service: and Judas agreed thus to mark him out to the officers, bidding them seize and hold him fast; which some think implies, that he expected Jesus would miraculously deliver himself. Accordingly he came up to him with the utmost effrontery, and with an address expressive of the highest respect and affection, he kissed him: but Jesus, with a meek rebuke of his complicated hypocrisy, treachery, and ingratitude, calling him friend, or companion, as an aggravation of his guilt, demanded of him, Why he came thus attended? The officers then approached and apprehended him: and Peter, recollecting his promise, and purposing to show his readiness to fight in his Master's cause, drew a sword with which he was armed, and, without waiting for orders, aimed a blow at the head of the high priest's servant, and cut off his ear: probably he was one of the rudest and most forward in the company. It is supposed that John did not write his Gospel till after Peter's death; he therefore recorded the names of both parties, which the other evangelists had concealed. Our Lord, however, ordered Peter to put up his sword again, "as all they, who took the sword, would perish with the sword." This intimated to the disciples, that their warfare was to be of a spiritual nature, and not to be waged with such carnal weapons: it meant, that they, who are prompt to fight, and avenge their own cause, only bring mischief and death upon themselves; and perhaps it implied, that the Jews, who now used the Roman sword against him, would soon perish by it. He furthermore added, that he needed not their feeble help; for if he chose to decline his sufferings, he could speedily obtain from his Father even more than twelve legions of angels; that is, more angels than there were legionary soldiers in the largest Roman armies, or more than seventy thousand angels, to fight for him. The idea will appear most grand and sublime to those, who consider the execution made in the army of the proud Assyrian, by a single angel in one night's time! But in this case he inquired how the Scriptures could be accomplished, which predicted, that the Messiah must be cut off, and be numbered with transgressors. (Marg. Ref.) Then addressing those that came to

apprehend him, he demanded why they came out against him with such warlike preparations, as if he had been some desperate robber, at the head of a determined gang, who could not be seized without much danger and difficulty? Whereas he had daily appeared among them, as a teacher, unarmed, and unattended, except by a few fishermen, and had acted in the most peaceable manner. Indeed they had before been secretly restrained from assaulting him: but now his time was come; and all this was ordered and performed, that the Scriptures might be exactly accomplished. When therefore the disciples perceived that he intended quietly to yield himself up to them, their courage and resolution at once entirely failed, and they all forsook him, and fled to save themselves. This conduct can by no means be excused; but thus his words were fulfilled, that they should all be offended because of him. It is remarkable, that our Lord so over-awed the spirits of the assailants, that they never attempted any violence even against Peter, nor offered to apprehend any of the company. (Note, John xviii. 4-9.)

V. 57-62. The grand council of the Jews was convened at the high priest's palace at that late hour, waiting to have Jesus brought before them; and thither they conducted him, bound as a criminal. Peter likewise, having in part recovered from his fright, followed at some distance, to see how matters would terminate: and having got admission into the high priest's palace, he associated with the servants, as if he had been a stranger drawn thither from mere curiosity. (Marg. Ref.) This was another false step tending to his fall: by striking the high priest's servant, he had rendered himself obnoxious and afraid of being detected; and seeing he had not courage openly to attend Jesus as his disciple, he ought by no means to have gone at all: for thus he got into the midst of enemies, and was forced to hear, with apparent approbation, all their scoffs, insults, menaces, and blasphemies; and so he entered into temptation. In the mean time, the council earnestly sought for persons to bear false witness against Jesus, as conscious that they could procure no other, and as desirous of giving their proceedings an appearance of law and justice, and that a capital sentence having been denounced against him, they might apply to the Roman governor to have it put in execution. The professed calling in and entertaining of false witnesses against Christ will not seem strange, if it be remembered, that among the Jews, in actions against seducers of the people or false prophets, it was lawful to say any thing, whether true or false, no man being permitted to say any

63 But ¹ Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, ¹ I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be ² the Christ, the Son of God.

64 Jesus saith unto him, ¹ Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, ¹ Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on ² the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

65 Then ¹ the high priest rent his clothes, saying, ² He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

66 What think ye? They answered and said, ² He is guilty of death.

67 Then ¹ did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; ² and others smote him with ³ the palms of their hands,

68 Saying, ¹ Prophecy unto us, ² thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?

69 ¶ Now ² Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with ¹ Jesus of Galilee.

70 But ² he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

71 And ² when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, ² This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

72 And again he denied ² with an oath, ¹ I do not know the man.

73 And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, ² Surely thou also art ¹ one of them; ³ for thy speech bewrayeth thee.

74 Then ¹ began he to curse and to swear, ² saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

75 And Peter ² remembered the words of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. ² And he went out, and wept bitterly.

XII. 60 John xviii. 27 — g. 24. Luke xxi. 61, 62. John xxi. 72. — a. xviii. 3-5 Luke xxii. 52 Rom. vii. 18-20. 1 Cor. iv. 7 Gal. vi. 1. 1 Pet. i. 5

‘thing in defence of them.’ (Hammond.) This extract from the Jewish writers shows the blindness and iniquity of their teachers to have been beyond conception great. But whilst many appeared against him, they could find no two persons agreeing in any one testimony, without which the law forbade them to put any man to death. At length two persons concurred in testifying, that he had declared himself able to destroy the temple, and to build it again in three days. The words, which our Lord had uttered long before, were widely different from this statement of them; so that their testimony was false, though it had the semblance of truth; yet even these two did not so agree as to give any ground to a regular sentence of condemnation. (Note, John, ii. 18-22.) Indeed, it does not appear in what respect any thing capital criminal could have been found in these words, if they had actually been spoken. The high priest, however, arose from his place, in great commotion, as if some great crime had been proved, demanding, whether Jesus had nothing to say in his own behalf, when such things were witnessed against him?

V. 63-68. Our Lord remained silent before this iniquitous tribunal, not merely from perfect meekness and patience, but as our Surety, that we might have an effectual plea before the tribunal of God. The high priest, therefore, at length solemnly adjured him by the living God, to declare whether he was the Christ, the Son of the living God, or not? This was the customary method at that time of putting men upon their oath, to which the criminals, or witnesses, were required to answer as in the presence of God. When the matter therefore was thus proposed, our Lord saw good to answer, that indeed he had declared the real truth; and that, notwithstanding his

present despised condition, they would see him, as the Son of man, sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. This is generally interpreted, with reference to the prophecy of Daniel, of his exaltation at the right hand of the Father, which was manifested by the pouring out of the Spirit on his disciples, and the vengeance executed by his power on Jerusalem; but his final coming to judgment seems also to have been intended; and the members of the council were warned, that they would at length be constrained to stand before his awful tribunal. (Marg. Ref.) This declaration was evidently what the high priest wanted: and therefore he rent his clothes, as if in detestation of blasphemy, inquiring, what need they had to examine any more witnesses, as they had all heard this blasphemy? In consequence, they unanimously brought him in, guilty of a capital crime, and passed the sentence of death upon him; and the attendants began, by the allowance of the rulers, to insult, buffet, and spit upon him, with the greatest disdain imaginable. Having covered his eyes, they smote him with their rods, or rather with the palms of their hands, demanding of him a specimen of his prophetic gift, by declaring the names of those, who, one after another, smote him. Thus they, without intending it, fulfilled several prophecies, the literal accomplishment of which must previously have appeared highly improbable. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 69-75. (Marg. Ref.) Every thing which Peter had seen and heard, from his entrance into the high priest's palace, must have tended to dismay his mind. Whilst in this situation, surrounded with terrors and dangers on every side, and doubtless assaulted by strong temptations

CHAP. XXVII.

Jesus is delivered bound to Pilate, 1, 2. Judas, in remorse, restores the silver, and hangs himself, 3—5. The priests fulfil the Scripture, in disposing of the

money, 6—10. Christ is silent before Pilate, 11—14; who proposes to release him, according to the custom of the feast, 15—18. Pilate's wife, alarmed by a dream, warns him to desist, 19. He washes his hands, to clear himself; and,

from Satan, a young woman challenged him as a follower of Jesus; and the dread of immediate detection, with all its imagined consequences, made him forget his promises and resolutions. He was ready to fight for his Master, but he had not before thought of the ignominious death of a criminal; he was therefore surprised into a denial of Christ, and a declaration, that he knew not what the woman meant by such an assertion. Mark informs us, that at this time the cock crowed; yet Peter paid no regard to it. When he was gone out into the porch, or portico, belonging to the palace, perhaps with some thoughts of departing, another female servant saw him, and said to those around her, that he certainly had been an attendant of Jesus: accordingly *they charged him with it*; (*Note, Luke xxii. 58*;) and he again denied it, declaring with an oath that he did not so much as know him. This probably prevented him from attempting to go away; and in consequence, after another hour, they who stood by came to him, with a relation of Malchus, whose ear he had cut off, and with greater confidence declared, that he assuredly was one of them; for they had seen him with Jesus in the garden, and his Galilean dialect betrayed him as one of his followers: and Peter, now filled with extreme terror, began to curse and to swear, or to anathematize himself, as accursed of God and devoted to utter destruction, if he so much as knew the man! Whilst he was using this horrid language the cock again crowed; and Jesus, being come into sight, turned and looked upon him. Thus he was at once brought to recollect the words of Jesus, and his own rash engagements. His whole guilt immediately rushed into his mind; he without delay left the place, full of the deepest shame, anguish, and remorse; and “wept bitterly” at the remembrance of his profaneness, treachery, cowardice, and ingratitude. Peter was left thus to fall, in order to give him a deeper acquaintance with his own heart, to abate his self-confidence, and to render him more modest, humble, and compassionate: and his whole subsequent conduct showed, that he had exceedingly profited by the painful lesson. The event hath also proved most instructive in various ways to believers ever since; and if infidels, pharisees, and hypocrites, will stumble at it, or abuse it, they do it at their peril. (*Marg. Ref.*) “Peter, by the wonderful providence of God, appointed to be a witness of all these things, is prepared to the example of singular constancy, by the experience of his own incredulity.” (*Beza.*)—“I venture to say, that it is useful to proud men to fall into some open and manifest sin, that they may be displeased with themselves, as they had already fallen by their self-complacency. For Peter, being displeased with himself, wept in a more salutary manner, than he had presumed, when pleased with himself.” (*Augustin.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—13.

Amidst the apparently confused, casual, and distressing

events, which take place in the world, through the treachery, avarice, ambition, or impiety of mankind, we should always advert to the “determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,” as bounding, directing, and over-ruling all, for the purposes of his own glory, and the benefit of those who trust in him. “There are many devices in the heart of man;” and ungodly politicians form their plans with profound sagacity, and conceal them with deep dissimulation; yet, contrary to their intentions, they are led to arrange, or alter them, into a subserviency to the secret counsel of the Lord! The enmity of the carnal heart against the law, truth, and image of God, is irreconcilable and mortal; it rages with greater violence in hypocritical professors than in other men; but most of all in covetous and ambitious church-men. Thus power and policy have ever combined against the Person and cause of Jesus; yet they have not been able to prevail against them. But there have always been a remnant of another character: these are humble, penitent, and believing; they reverence and love the Redeemer’s Person and character; they deem themselves under infinite obligations to him; they long to express their love and gratitude, and zeal for his glory; and they count nothing too valuable to be renounced for his sake, or employed in his service. These principles operate differently, as circumstances vary; but they will always produce such actions as honour Christ, and as he will accept and commend: for he judges of men’s conduct by their motives, and will not reject a well-meant service, springing from humble faith and love, though it may appear to us informal. But covetous hypocrites are ready to exclaim, “To what purpose is this waste?” when they see others liberal in honouring Christ: even the *fraudulent* and *unjust* will plead for *charity*, when they can discredit the pious effusions of a believer’s fervent love: and too often their plausible pretences seduce injudicious, or less zealous, disciples, to censure those services which Christ accepts. But he will plead the cause of his humble followers; and he will rebuke those, who trouble them for their good works that they have wrought for his name’s sake. It is his plan, that there should, in every age and place, be poor Christians, as his stated representatives, in order to make trial of the faith and love of his disciples; that, whenever they will, they may relieve them for his sake. This is the ordinary method; but extraordinary expressions of our love and gratitude are sometimes proper; and these will not be found inconsistent with each other.

V. 14—25.

Upright persons, when betrayed into a mistake, will take reproof in good part; but it often proves the detection of hypocrites: thus the discovery of their secret motives, and the commendation of those whom they dislike, exasperate them, and push them forward to still baser attempts:

being urged by the people, with imprecations, he releases Barabbas, and delivers Jesus to be crucified, 20—26. He is mocked, and crowned with thorns by the

soldiers, 27—32; crucified between two thieves, 33—38; and reviled by the people and rulers, 39—44. The Lord is darknessened, 45; Jesus calling on God expires.

and, whilst those whom they censured, are had in perpetual remembrance, themselves sink into final infamy and misery. But with what scrupulous exactness should every one guard against the first workings of avarice, and shun the most minute deviations from equity! For when dishonesty in comparatively little things has rendered the conscience callous, and given energy to temptation, men become capable of the most shameless injustice without hesitation; and the common question is, "What will ye give me?" Then the most endeared or sacred ties will be broken, for paltry filthy lucre, by men who set their consciences and their souls to sale! And by these means, scheming villains, who were at a loss how to accomplish their intended iniquities, are furnished with instruments as detestable as themselves; and they mutually assist, and yet abhor and despise, each other. But let us follow the steps of our divine Master, whatever man may devise against us. His disciples may inquire when, where, and with what preparation, he would have them to attend on his institutions: but they should take it for granted, that he will not countenance neglect in any; as he himself attended on all that were then in force. Every heart is in his hands: he knoweth those hidden ones who favour his cause, and will graciously visit all who are willing to receive him; and he will take care to procure from them entertainment for his disciples also. But divine ordinances are seldom administered, even to a few persons, without the intrusion of some hypocrite: and the cause of Christ is often most betrayed by some of those, who seem most entirely to belong to him. This consideration may often make us exceedingly sorrowful; and it should always render us very diligent in self-examination. When a few persons are met for social prayer, religious conversation, or at the Lord's table, it may probably occur to each of them to suppose, that their heart-searching Saviour is saying to them, "Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me." They should not, however, look round on others with suspicion; but with self-examination and prayer should say, "Lord, is it I?" We ought to be the more earnest in this investigation, because the doom of such domestic enemies will be most dreadful; so that it may be said of them especially, that "it would have been good for them, if they had never been born."

V. 26—35.

Self-examination and fervent prayers are peculiarly proper before the Lord's supper; in order, that, as "Christ our Passover is now sacrificed for us," we may keep this commemorative "feast, not with the old leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth;" and that we may every time we partake of it, renew our repentance, our faith in his blood, our consent to his covenant, our exercise of love to him and his people, and our surrender of ourselves to his service, as "bought with a price, to glorify him with our bodies and our spirits, which are his." Whilst we contemplate the outward signs of his

body broken and his blood shed for the remission of our sins, let us recollect, that the feast was as expensive to him, as if he had literally "given us his flesh to eat, and his blood to drink;" that there must be a real, (though a spiritual,) participation of him, and appropriation of his salvation to our souls, or else we shall have no benefit from his sacrifice: and that by a continued reliance on him, in lively faith, we must be strengthened and recruited for our conflict, our work, and the race that is set before us. Let no humble believer then neglect the obedience of faith and love, in respect to this command of his dying Saviour; as safety and comfort should be sought in the way of his precepts. Whilst multitudes profane this sacred ordinance by a proud, pharisaical, infidel, or licentious attendance, and numbers, by stately absenting themselves, confess their consciousness that they have no part or lot in the blessings of salvation, even many true Christians are guilty of ingratitude and hard suspicions of the gracious Redeemer, and do great harm to their own souls, by refusing this profession of their faith and love, or by so seldom joining with his people in thus remembering him. It may be apprehended that some are alarmed by the case and doom of Judas, and the conscious hypocrite may well be called upon to pause and tremble at the thought: but the feeble Christian should remember, that all the apostles were offended during that very night, in which they had both eaten the Passover and the Lord's supper, and that Peter fell in a more dreadful manner; yet their guilt was not unpardonable, nor their fall irrecoverable. Our communicating indeed ought to excite us to redouble our watchfulness; but the fear of afterwards being overcome by temptation should never induce any man to neglect obedience to the express command of Christ. Rather we should seek, in this affecting ordinance, to enjoy his "love, which is better than wine;" and to anticipate the felicity of heaven, when we shall rejoice with the Saviour, and he with us, unspeakably and eternally.

V. 36—46.

Whilst we with thankfulness take the cup of salvation, let us never forget that cup of wrath, which the Redeemer drank off to the very dregs, for the remission of our sins. If we were not surprisingly drowsy in spiritual things, we never could read of, or meditate on, Gethsemane, without the most lively affections, and most instructive recollections. Here let us look attentively, that we may learn to distinguish between the sufferings of a martyr, and those of our atoning Sacrifice. View a poor frail sinner, under the smiles of his reconciled Father, serene and cheerful in the prospect and endurance of every possible torture: then, behold the incarnate Son of God, the holy, undefiled, "well beloved of the Father, in whom he was well pleased," prostrate on the earth, exceedingly sorrowful even unto death, and sweating great drops of blood, rolling to the ground; and with this scene before our eyes, let it be determined, whether he was not then enduring the wrath and tremendous frown of God, as our Surety, and

46—50. *The veil of the temple is rent, the earth quakes, the tombs burst open, and the centurion confesses him, as the Son of God, 51—54. Certain women*

witness these scenes, 55, 56. Joseph of Arimathea asks his body and buries it, 57—61. His tomb is sealed, and a watch placed at it, 62—66.

the vicarious sacrifice of our sins. And let the careless and impenitent ask themselves, Did God's own hand inflict these insupportable strokes, in fulfilment of his ancient prophecies on his beloved Son, who was more valued by him, than the whole visible creation; and will he break his word, in order to spare a determined rebel and enemy, who takes encouragement to sin from the very persuasion of his being merciful? Most vain and destructive presumption! Did the load of imputed guilt so weigh down the soul of him, concerning whom it is said, that "he upholdeth all things by the word of his power?" Into what an abyss of misery unknown must they then sink, whose iniquities are left upon their own heads, a burden far too heavy for them to bear! "How will they escape, who neglect so great salvation?" What a forlorn hope must that of the Pharisee and the infidel be, who expect happiness in their own way, in contempt of that which infinite wisdom hath devised, and infinite love effected, at a price which baffles the powers of computation itself! Assuredly it will issue in black despair, with that of every one who abuses the doctrine of a free salvation, as an excuse for indulged wickedness. But the same scene discovers a cheerful dawn of hope to the trembling, desponding, penitent: here we see God's infinite hatred of sin, and his infinite love of sinners; his determination to satisfy his justice, and his delight in exercising mercy: in short, we must resort to Gethsemane, to learn repentance, hatred of sin, humility, hope, love, patience, meekness, and self-denying obedience; and to find comfort under dejections and temptations. Here we see our pattern, our motives, our encouragements; here we learn the vanity of the world, the evil of sin, and our obligations to live and suffer for his glory, who agonized and died for our salvation. Whilst here we abide, we should beware of drowsiness: when our souls are sorrowful, we should pour them out in prayer: and when nature would shrink from suffering, and would say, "It is not possible, let this cup pass from me," we should learn to add, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." We should also remember, that even our merciful High Priest will rebuke those whom he loves: and if we promise much, and come evidently short in little things, he will, as it were, say to us, "What could ye not watch with me one hour?" We must all indeed be tempted; yet we should be much afraid of entering into temptation, by being drawn into such circumstances, as give our enemies an opportunity of closing with us, and obtaining their advantage against us. To be secured from this, we should watch and pray without ceasing: for though, in the regenerate, the spirit is willing for service or sufferings, yet we carry about with us the remains of a carnal mind, our hearts are deceitful above all things, we are weak through the flesh, and should continually be looking to the Lord, to hold us up, that we may be safe. But, after repeated warnings and rebukes, how dull and inattentive do we often remain! This causes our compassionate Lord to employ other means and instruments, to rouse us from our fatal lethargy; and when

sharp afflictions or persecutions come upon us, he will, as it were, say to us, "Sleep on now, and take your rest," if you are able: yet if even then we arise and follow him, he will preserve us from all real evil.

V. 47—56.

Whilst we contemplate the insolence and enmity of those who assaulted the Prince of Peace, and above all the treachery of Judas, with abhorrence, let us not forget, that such we are by nature, and so should we have done, if left to ourselves. No enemies, however, deserve such decided execration, as those professed disciples, who betray Christ with a kiss. It behooves us to copy the meekness and patience of Christ; and to avoid the rashness and cowardice of Peter and the other apostles. Whatever provocations we meet with from avowed adversaries, or false friends, or however we may be tried by the infirmities of inconsistent believers, we should learn of Jesus to possess our souls in patience, and to use no weapons, except sound arguments, mild expostulations, kind actions, and fervent prayers. Thus we shall be kept in peace; whilst "they who take the sword will perish by the sword." If it be necessary for us, the prevalent intercession of our heavenly Advocate will procure for us the protection of legions of angels: but when our appointed time is come, we must be removed; yet the Scriptures must needs be fulfilled in us also, and all the promises belong to every believer in Christ.

V. 57—68.

Happy are they, against whom their most malicious enemies can allege nothing, except by false witnesses! Persecutors will indeed often be more assiduous in doing mischief, than the most diligent Christian in doing good; and they will be sometimes watching to execute their vile purposes, even when he is neglecting to watch and pray: they will find false witnesses, and invent slanders, to give a colour to their cruel hatred; and they will pervert the words of those who plead the cause of God to a quite contrary meaning: by these methods Jesus has been persecuted in his followers in every age. But whilst such men pretend to execrate the imagined crimes of those whom they condemn, their own consciences often protest against the sentence, and they feel that their proceedings are iniquitous: how then will they abide the coming of the Judge, when they shall "see him at the right hand of power, and "coming in the clouds of heaven?" Let then those, who have the honour to suffer for his sake, contemplate his calm behaviour before the council, and his intrepid confession of his true character; and let them consider the crimes alleged against him, the condemnation passed on him, and the contempt, indignity, and insult, which he most patiently endured. For the Christian cannot reasonably expect so much tenderness and compassion, when suffering for the truth, as a thief or murderer might, when punished for his crimes: and if he look to the scene which we are considering, he will perceive, that disdain, cruel mockings,

WHEN the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.

2 And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

3 ¶ Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the

thirty pieces of silver, to the chief priests and elders,

4 Saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.

5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

and every expression of abhorrence, are the sure portion of the true disciple, from such men as spat in the face of the holy Jesus, and as buffeted and derided the Lord of glory! Yet let us boldly confess his name, and bear the reproach, and he will confess us before his Father's throne; whilst those, who pretend to do God service by murdering his saints, will be covered with shame and everlasting contempt.

V. 69—75.

Let all beware of vain confidence and self-preference: it becomes not us to boast, or resolve what we will do: rather let us decline temptation as much as we can, and trust in the Lord alone to uphold us. Let us also avoid rashness, and pray for victory over the fear of man. In all these matters, we need much forbearance from our gracious Lord: though not traitors, we are prone to decline the cross; though we do follow Christ, it is commonly at a great distance; and it is not unusual for us to be afraid of being known to belong to him! But when self-confidence induces men to thrust themselves, uncalled, into perilous circumstances, we may expect to hear of lamentable consequences. Little do we know how we should act in very difficult situations, if left to ourselves: the snow doth not more naturally melt before the fire, than our resolutions vanish, when we are entered into temptation. Then who can say, what he will, or what he will not, do? The way of sin is also down-hill; every step makes way for another still more fatal; and there is nothing so false, impious, or atrocious, to which we might not gradually be tempted, if the Lord wholly left us. "Let him, therefore, that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall;" and let us all distrust our own hearts, and rely wholly on the Lord. If any have fallen, let them think of Peter's recovery, and not despair; and let them recollect the words of Christ, as well as their own sins; that their tears, confessions, and humiliations, may be mingled with hope. And let us all frequently remember our past follies and manifold instances of ingratitude; that we may learn watchfulness, humility, caution, and compassion for the tempted and fallen, by the experience of our own numerous mistakes, sins, and recoveries.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVII. V. 1, 2. The night must have been far advanced, before the transactions recorded in the foregoing chapter were finished: and it was early in the morning, when the chief priests and elders delivered up Jesus to the governor. It is not certain whether they adjourned for a while, or continued together all night. If they had

not "taken counsel against him to put him to death," they would have had no occasion to apply to Pilate; for they had still the power of executing lighter punishments: but they were not allowed to inflict death without the consent of the Roman governor. Perhaps they were the more willing to deliver Jesus up to him, because the Roman punishment of crucifixion was more ignominious and excruciating than stoning. They therefore bound Jesus, having probably loosed him during his examination; or they confined him more closely than before, as a condemned malefactor, and delivered him up to Pontius Pilate, the Roman procurator of Judea, in order that he might be put to death by his authority.—To ensure success in that quarter, it was necessary to give their accusations against Jesus such a colour and shape, as should prevail upon the governor to put him to death. They had condemned him for blasphemy: but this they knew would have little weight with a pagan, who, like Gallio, would "care for none of these things." They therefore resolved to bring him before Pilate as a *state-prisoner*, and to charge him with treasonable and seditious practices. (Bp. Porteus.) (Note, Luke xxiii. 1—5. Marg. Ref.)

V. 3—5. (Notes, Acts i. 15—20.) Whatever Judas's views and expectations were, when he betrayed his Lord, he saw his own conduct in a very different light, when he found that he was condemned to die, and was about to be crucified as a malefactor and a slave. Then "he repented himself;" yet not with genuine humiliation and godly sorrow, united with faith, hope, and love: but he was sorry that he had committed this one crime; his conscience was filled with horror and remorse, and his heart with anguish and terror. He could not but be sensible of the excellency and holiness of the character of Jesus; probably he was convinced that he was the promised Messiah; the miracles which he had witnessed and the miraculous powers which he had received, must occur to his memory; and the wisdom, condescension, and love of his Lord, together with his peculiar kindness to him, must on this occasion rush at once on his recollection. Thus being left by God, Satan, who before had tempted him to presumption, now urged him to despair. Yet before his last fatal determination, perhaps hoping to obtain a reversal of Christ's condemnation, he went to the chief priests and elders, to return the wages of his iniquity. They were at that time in the precincts of the temple; whether they held their council there, and had not delivered up Jesus to Pilate; or whether they had gone thither after he was delivered up to be crucified, in order to perform some

6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, "It is not lawful for us to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood."

7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

8 Wherefore that field was called,

The field of blood, unto this day.

9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value;

10 And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

hypocritical task of devotion. In their presence, however, Judas acknowledged, that he had sinned, in that he had betrayed an innocent person into their hands, who was by that means likely to be put to death; and he was now fully sensible, that his conduct had been peculiarly base and criminal. This was a most honourable testimony to Christ's character; but though this crime lay with intolerable weight on the conscience of Judas, and he confessed it to man, and dared not to keep the infamous wages of his crime; yet it does not appear that he was at all sensible of the guilt of his hypocrisy, and all the other wickedness committed during the whole course of his past life. But the rulers were too malignant and hardened, to be any ways affected by this interesting circumstance; and they coldly declared, that the opinion and conduct of so vile a wretch concerned not them; let him look to that himself, for they were determined to put Jesus to death. This completed Judas' despair; and, casting down the money, he departed, and immediately "went and hanged himself." It seems evident that he was his own executioner, by *strangling himself*; and this account may be reconciled with that of Peter, as recorded in the Acts, by supposing that he suspended himself in such a place and manner, that the rope, or wood to which it was fastened, brake; and that he fell from a great height, and so burst asunder; this coming to pass by the special purpose of God, to render his body a more terrible spectacle to all beholders, and to cause his death to be the more remarked. It admits of little doubt, but that Judas' death preceded that of his injured Lord; so speedily did divine vengeance overtake him! Yet the rulers took no notice even of this alarming circumstance! It appears to me, that the acquittal or condemnation of Jesus never entered into Judas' contemplation. All he thought of was gain. He had kept the common purse, and had robbed it: and his only object was to obtain a sum of money, which he determined to have, at all events, and left consequences to take care of themselves. But when he saw, that his divine Master, whom he knew to be perfectly innocent, was actually condemned to death, his conscience then flew in his face, his guilt rose up before him in all its horrors: he could no longer bear the agonizing tortures that racked his soul, but went immediately and destroyed himself. The answer of the chief priests, was perfectly natural for men of that character. Men who had any feeling, any sentiments of common humanity or even of common justice, would have put an immediate stop to the proceedings. But this was far from entering into their plan. All they wanted, was the destruction of a man, whom they hated and feared; and whose life and doctrine was a standing reproach to them. And yet, to see the astonishing inconsistency of

human nature, and the strange contrivances by which the most abandoned of men endeavour to satisfy their minds; these very men, had wonderful qualms of conscience, about putting into the treasury the money, which they themselves had given as "the price of blood." Judas was the constant companion of our Saviour's ministry, and witness to every thing he said or did. If there had been any plan concerted to impose a false religion on the world, Judas must have been in the secret. His testimony is invaluable: because it is the testimony of an unwilling witness; the testimony, not of a friend, but of an enemy." (Bp. Porteus.)

V. 6—10. When the priests and rulers had leisure, with a scrupulosity worthy of them, they consulted what was to be done with the money restored by Judas, and determined that it was unlawful to put it into the sacred treasury; having been the price paid for Jesus' blood, and proving eventually that of Judas' also. Yet they thought it proper to lay it out in some way that it might appear *charitable*: and, therefore they purchased with it a piece of waste ground which had been dug up for clay by a potter, and was of small value; that it might be appropriated to the burial of such persons of other nations as died at Jerusalem: on which account that field was called *Achedama*, or the *field of blood*, even to the time when Matthew wrote his Gospel. This fulfilled an ancient prophecy, which is here said to have been spoken by Jeremiah, but which we have already considered in the prophecy of Zechariah, (Note, Zech. xi. 10—14.) Various conjectures have been formed on the subject: but it is most natural to admit that a trivial error hath crept into the text; for, the change of a single letter, according to the abbreviated manner in which names are written in the old manuscripts, would suffice to occasion the mistake. The passage is quoted something differently than it stands in the prophecy: but the meaning is, that the thirty shekels, the vile price at which the Jews valued and bargained for the Shepherd of Israel, as if he had been a slave, came into the hands of a potter: this was foretold, and exactly accomplished.

V. 11—18. Little did the governor imagine who it was that then stood before him! Little did he suspect, that he himself must one day stand before the tribunal of that very person, whom he was then about to judge as a criminal! (Bp. Porteus.) The rulers of the Jews, knowing how jealous the Romans were of their authority, accused Jesus of advancing claims to the kingdom. Pilate therefore asked him, whether he were the king of the Jews? To which he answered in the affirmative: yet, as Pilate had doubtless heard of the inoffensive demeanour of Jesus and his few followers, he probably thought his pretensions more worthy of censure than opposition. His prosecutors, therefore, fearing that they should not carry

xxv. 16, 25. Mark
xv. 2. Luke
xxiii. 3. John
xxv. 42-36.

xxvi. 25, 64.
Mark xiv. 67.
John xxvii. 37.
1 Tim. v. 13.

xxvi. 13, 14.
Ps
xxviii. 13, 14.

Is. liii. 7. Mark
xv. 3-5. John
8-1. Acts
xvii. 32. 1 Pet. ii.
20.

xxvi. 62. John
xvii. 25. Acts
xxv. 24.

xxvi. 62. John
xvii. 25. Acts
xxv. 24.

xxvi. 62. John
xvii. 25. Acts
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xvii. 25. Acts
xxv. 24.

xxvi. 62. John
xvii. 25. Acts
xxv. 24.

xxvi. 62. John
xvii. 25. Acts
xxv. 24.

xxvi. 62. John
xvii. 25. Acts
xxv. 24.

xxvi. 62. John
xvii. 25. Acts
xxv. 24.

xxvi. 62. John
xvii. 25. Acts
xxv. 24.

xxvi. 62. John
xvii. 25. Acts
xxv. 24.

xxvi. 62. John
xvii. 25. Acts
xxv. 24.

xxvi. 62. John
xvii. 25. Acts
xxv. 24.

11 ¶ And ^a Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, ^b Thou sayest.

12 And when ^c he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

13 Then saith Pilate unto him, ^d Hearst thou not how many things they witness against thee?

14 And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor ^e marvelled greatly.

15 Now at ^f that ^g feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would.

16 And they had then ^h a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.

17 Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, ⁱ Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus, which is called Christ?

18 For ^j he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

19 ¶ When he was set down on the judgment-seat, ^k his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with ^l that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

20 But the chief priests and elders ^m persuaded the multitude that they ⁿ should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

21 The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.

22 Pilate saith unto them, ^o What shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified.

23 And the governor said, ^p Why? what evil hath he done? ^q But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

24 When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, ^r and washed his

their point, were earnest in laying many things to his charge, which only convinced Pilate that they envied his authority and reputation among the people, as eclipsing their own. Yet when Pilate inquired whether Jesus had nothing to say in answer to all these accusations? He remained silent! He had no guilt to confess; yet he would not exculpate himself, for he submitted to condemnation, that he might die as a sacrifice for our sins. This silence, which doubtless was distinguished by a mild and sedate dignity of aspect, the reverse of the sullenness of an obstinate criminal, astonished Pilate. He believed him to be perfectly innocent; and yet he would use neither arguments nor entreaties to rescue himself from that terrible death with which he was threatened! Pilate was, however, desirous of releasing him, and as it had become a custom to pardon some condemned Jew, at the feast of the passover, to please the people, Pilate supposed that this custom would give him the occasion; for he concluded that the multitude in some degree favoured him. So that when they required him to indulge them as usual, he proposed none but Jesus and Barabbas. And as Barabbas was a noted criminal, who had been guilty of murder as well as robbery, he doubtless concluded that they would unanimously prefer Jesus to him.

V. 19-23. Whilst these things were in agitation, another circumstance occurred, which increased Pilate's perplexity, and his desire to save Jesus: for his wife sent to caution him by no means to have any hand in the death of that *righteous Man*, whom he was solicited to condemn, for she had endured much misery by terrifying dreams respecting him; which made her conclude, that his death would be avenged in an awful manner upon all concerned in it. In the mean time the rulers were using all their influence with the people, to induce them to demand the release of Barabbas, and the crucifixion of Jesus: and when Pilate renewed his proposal, he was surprised to find that

Barabbas was unanimously chosen; and that they were clamorous in demanding the crucifixion of Jesus, whom they had called the Messiah, though they could lay no crime to his charge. On other occasions, the condemnation of any Jew, who was not a slave, to this ignominious and cruel death, would have hazarded an insurrection: but the people had been disappointed in their expectations of a temporal kingdom; and many of them seem to have thought that a Messiah of his character was worthy only of contempt and crucifixion. It has, however, often excited wonder, that the multitude, who but a short time before had welcomed Jesus, with loud Hosannas, as the Son of David and the king of Israel, and who so favoured his cause, as to render the rulers afraid of openly proceeding against him, should all at once be induced to demand his crucifixion with irresistible vehemence! But a multitude is a fluctuating body, and resembles the waters of the sea, which yield to the least impulse of the wind.—Many, who before led the people and favoured the cause of Christ, intimidated by late events, had no doubt retired: others were disappointed, because he would not assume temporal dominion, and raise an army to liberate them from the Romans; and several persons, who had been driven away by the popular torrent in his favour, when he entered Jerusalem, no doubt at this time came forward, attended by emissaries from the scribes and priests. And they who remember, that in every multitude, thus collected, “the most part know not wherefore they are come together,” will readily perceive that a small company of considerable persons, eager on the contrary part, and skilful in exciting men's passions and prejudices, would soon give a new direction to the populace: and that the change, from *Hosanna*, to *Crucify*, was not peculiarly different from other changes, which varying circumstances have made in large companies, promiscuously assembled.

(*Matth. Ref.*)

hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this ^a just person: see ye to it.

25 Then answered all the people, and said, ^a His blood be on us, ^b and on our children.

26 Then ^a released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had ^c scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

27 ¶ Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the ^{*} common hall, and gathered unto him the whole ^b band of *soldiers*.

28 And ^a as they came out, ^b they found

him a scarlet robe.

29 And when they had ^a platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, ^a Hail, king of the Jews!

30 And ^a they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

31 And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, ^a and led him away to crucify him.

32 And ^a as they came out, ^b they found

V. 24, 25. Pilate was very reluctant to condemn Jesus to be crucified: but the Jews were so bent upon it, that he concluded it would be hazardous to stand out against them; lest they should excite an insurrection, or accuse him to the emperor as disaffected to his authority. His government was also very odious to the Jews, and he was afraid of exasperating them. But his struggle on this occasion shows the power of conscience in the worst of men, and the horror that it often has of wilful deliberate murder. The whole process more resembled the examination of a sacrifice, that it might be evinced to be without blemish, than the trial of a criminal for condemnation: and it is unprecedented in the annals of mankind, for a person, condemned to so dreadful a death, to have been at the very time pronounced *innocent* and *righteous*, by the person who conducted those that apprehended him, and the judge who passed sentence on him, and at length by the very officer who superintended his execution; whilst they who clamorously demanded his death could allege no reason for their conduct. No doubt God providentially ordered all these circumstances, to make it evident, that Jesus suffered for no fault of his own, but merely for the sins of his people. When, however, Pilate had determined to yield to the desire of the Jews, as a salvo to his conscience, and a protestation against their injustice, "he took water, and washed his hands before them." This was probably a custom among the Romans, as well as the Jews, in averting their innocence of any crime charged on them. It was a most explicit testimony to Christ's innocence; but it was vain for Pilate to expect thus to free himself from the guilt of the innocent blood of a righteous person, when he was bound by office to protect him from his cruel enemies. Yet the Jews were more callous than the heathen governor: and whilst he feebly attempted to get clear of the guilt, they, by a most horrid imprecation, willingly took it all upon themselves and their posterity! This their imprecation hath been most awfully answered: as they were willing to bear the guilt of the blood which they were about to shed, so it actually was avenged on them in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, when great numbers were crucified; and doubtless some of these very persons, as well as of their children, were of the number: and the nation hath ever since been exposed to incessant injuries from man, and left as an anathema from God. They put Jesus to death, when the nation was assem-

bled to celebrate the passover; and when the nation was assembled for the same purpose, Titus shut them up within the walls of Jerusalem. The rejection of the true Messiah was their crime; and the following of false Messiahs to their destruction was their punishment. They bought Jesus as a slave, and they themselves were afterwards sold and bought as slaves, at the lowest prices. They put Jesus to death, lest the Romans should come and take away their place and nation; and the Romans did come and take away their place and nation. And, what is still more striking, and still more strongly marks the judgment of God upon them, they were punished with that very kind of death which they were so eager to inflict on the Saviour of mankind, the death of the cross; and that in such prodigious numbers, that Josephus assures us there wanted wood for crosses, and room to place them in. (Bp. Porteus.)

V. 26. Barabbas escaped, in consequence of Jesus' condemnation. He deserved death, but was preserved, and the righteous and holy Saviour suffered in his stead. This accords, as to the grand outline, with the method of a sinner's salvation, through the sufferings of Christ. The Jewish rulers, by using their influence in preserving a murderer from death, took an effectual method of bringing the vengeance of God on the land; though not so effectual, as by crucifying the Son of God. (Notes, Num. xxxv. 31—34. Mark xv. 7.)

V. 27—31. (Note, John xix. 1—7.) St. John expressly mentions Christ's being scourged and crowned with thorns, before Pilate finally passed sentence on him: it is therefore conjectured, that he had been scourged some time before, by orders from Pilate, in hopes that this disgrace and torture would have appeased the rage of the multitude, or softened them into compassion, and so have made way for his release. It is known that the Romans used to scourge malefactors, just before they were crucified; as if the exquisite tortures of crucifixion were not sufficient, without adding to them those of the scourge. (Bp. Porteus.) Possibly the scourging might be twice repeated; but it is more probable, that Matthew and Mark introduce this account not in the exact order of time in which it occurred. It is at least evident, that Pilate made an effort to save Jesus, after he had been scourged, and crowned with thorns: and perhaps the soldiers, after sentence was finally passed, carried still further the indigni-

1. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

Mark xv. 17. Luke xxi. 11. John x. 2. 8. U. xv. 19. Ps. xxi. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

e A.D. 33. 10. 1
9 A.D. 33. 10. 1

a man of ^c Cyrene, Simon by name : him they compelled to bear his cross.

4 Mark xv. 22
Luce xxi. 27
33. John xiii. 17

33 And when they were come unto a place called ^a Golgotha, that is to say, A place of a skull,

e A.D. 33. 10. 1
33. John xiii. 17
30

34 They ^c gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall : and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.

4 Mark xv. 22
Luce xxi. 27
33. John xiii. 17
30

35 And ^c they crucified him, and ^c parted his garments, casting lots : ^b that it might

be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

36 And ^c sitting down, they watched him there :

37 And set over his head ^b his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38 Then were there ^c two thieves cru-

i 31. Mark xv. 29-30

k Mark xv. 29
Luce xxi. 27
33. John xiii. 17
30

l 31. J. 12
Mark xv. 27, 28
Luce xxi. 27
33. John xiii. 17
30

31. John xiii. 17
30

ties which they had before commenced. But, in whatever order these events occurred, the blessed Jesus was at length delivered up, without reserve, to the insults, derision, and cruelty of the soldiers ; who, collecting the whole cohort into the pratorium, clothed him with a *scarlet*, or *purple*, robe, (perhaps a purple vestment with a scarlet robe over it ;) such as used to be worn by the Roman generals, being probably one that Pilate had cast off. Thus they arrayed him in the garments of royalty, as indignantly scornng his claim to be the “ King of the Jews :” and then mingling cruelty with contempt, they platted thorns into a crown for his head, and put a reed, or cane, such as were used to walk with, into his hand instead of a sceptre. Then they bowed their knee in mockery ; and at the same time they spat upon him, and smote the thorns into his temples, by taking the cane and striking him upon the head with it. We may form some conception of this scene, if we consider the ferocity, haughtiness, and impiety of the idolatrous Roman soldiers ; and how they were let loose on the mild and holy Jesus, to give full scope to their savage and cruel contempt, and to divert themselves with his sufferings, till they were even weary of mocking him. When this at length was the case, they took off from him the insignia of royalty ; and putting on him his own garments, they who were appointed to be his executioners led him away to crucify him. Had he suffered as a murderer, they would not thus have insulted him ; but would have in some measure pitied his anguish, whilst they executed the sentence of the law upon him.

V. 32—34. ‘ Jesus is led out of the city, that we may be brought into the heavenly kingdom. He found no comfort any where, that we might be filled with all comfort. He is made a curse, that we may be blessed. He is spoiled of his garments, that we might be enriched by his nakedness.’ (Beza.) It was customary for the persons who were sentenced to crucifixion to carry their crosses, or at least a heavy part of them, to the place where they were crucified. But Jesus had been so harassed by multiplied fatigues and miseries, that probably he appeared almost exhausted ; so that the persons employed might fear lest he should die under the burden, and escape their further cruelties, if they compelled him to bear the cross all the way to Calvary. It seems at first to have been laid upon him ; but afterwards meeting with Simon, a native of Cyrene, who probably was suspected of favouring him, they obliged him to bear the cross after him. Perhaps he bore the whole the rest of the way ; or he carried one end, whilst Jesus going before carried the other.

This aptly represented the believer’s conformity to his Lord, in bearing the cross, even the scorn and hatred of the world. In this manner they proceeded to a part of mount Calvary without the city, called Golgotha, or the *place of a skull* : being probably so called from the skulls and human bones that were there in abundance, as it had long been the place of execution and burial for malefactors. It was customary to give those that were to suffer this lingering and most painful death, a potion, to benumb their feelings, composed of wine mingled with myrrh or spices : and probably some compassionate persons had prepared this cordial, which they offered to Jesus ; but he would not taste it, as his purpose was to suffer death in all its bitterness. But others, full of contempt and malignity, had mingled vinegar with gall, to render it most nauseous, and offered it to him instead of the spiced wine, which having tasted he refused to drink : and thus an ancient prophecy of the Messiah was literally fulfilled. (Note, Ps. lxxix. 21.)—Those learned men, who endeavour to prove that the vinegar mingled with gall was in fact the same as “ the wine “ mingled with myrrh,” mentioned by St. Mark, seem to have forgotten this remarkable prophecy.

V. 35. The soldiers next proceeded to crucify Jesus. This was performed in the following manner : the sufferer was stripped almost naked, and extended on the wood of the cross as it lay on the ground ; his arms were then stretched out on the transverse beam, and fastened to it by spikes driven through the hands ; and the feet were fastened to the upright part of the cross, by a spike driven through both of them together. Then the cross was erected, and the foot of it, going into a hole made for that purpose, with a violent jerk, often dislocated some of the bones of the crucified person ; who, being suspended in this dreadful posture, hung in most exquisite torture, till at length loss of blood and excess of pain ended his life. It is plain that Jesus hung in this manner for six hours, before he expired ; yet it was thought wonderful that he died so soon, as many lived a whole day and night in this anguish, unless some method were taken to shorten their pains. When the soldiers, (four of whom were employed in it,) had completed the cruel business, they proceeded to part the clothes among them as their recompense : and finding the upper garment worn by Jesus to be made of one piece, they cast lots for it : and thus several prophecies concerning the Messiah received their accomplishment in Jesus. (Note, Ps. xxii. 12—18.)

V. 36. The soldiers watched, that none might remove the bodies of the persons crucified, till it was ascertained that they were dead,

in Ps xxii. 6, 7, 17. xxiii. 11—13.
 xxv. 10.
 Isai. 7—12. 20.
 Jer. 23. 10.
 12. 10—11.
 Mark xv. 24, 0.
 Luke xxi. 35.
 31. 1 Pet. 0 22—24.
 Gen. xxxiii. 19.
 20. Rev. xi. 0.
 xxvi. 61. Luke
 xxi. 20—23. John
 7. 19—22.
 P. 51. 1. 2. 3. 6.
 xxvi. 61. Luke
 xxi. 31.
 Ps. xlii. 12. 13.
 1. 8. Mark xv.
 31, 32. Luke xxi. 35. xlii. 35.

cified with him; one on the right hand, and another on the left.

39 And they that passed by ^m reviled him, wagging their heads.

40 And ^s saying, Thou ^s that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. ^s If thou be the Son of God, ^s come down from the cross.

41 Likewise also ^s the chief priests, mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said,

42 He ^s saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be ^s the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

43 He ^s trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, ^s I am the Son of God.

44 The ^s thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

45 Now ^s from the sixth hour there was ^s darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

John ix. 24. 37. A. D. 33. 4. 137. 2. Luke x. 36. Joseph. 43.
 u. p. 10. 2. xii. 6. xlii. 8. 2. 10. 18. xxxiii. 15. 10. xxxiii. 10. 10. xlii. 15. 17. v. 12—25. 7. 30. 36. xix. 7. y. 20. Job. xxi. 7. 9. Ps. xxxv. 15. Mark xv. 32. Luke xlii. 39, 40.
 z. Mark xv. 25. 39. 4. Luke xlii. 14, 45. aia. 3. Amos ii. 9. Rev. vii. 12. ix. 2.

V. 37, 38. It was usual, at least in remarkable cases, to affix the name and the crime of the crucified person, in writing, on the top of the cross: Pilate had ordered that it should be written in different languages over his head, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews;" for God over-ruled his mind thus to attest the truth concerning Jesus, as the Messiah, the King of the Jewish nation, and of the whole Israel of God. (Note, John xix. 20—22.) Yet at the same time two malefactors were crucified with him, and he was placed between them, as if more criminal than either of them; which was intended to disgrace him. — But this act of malignity, like many instances of the same nature, answered a purpose which the authors of 'it little thought of or intended. It was the completion of a prophecy of Isaiah, in which he says of the Messiah, "He was numbered among the transgressors." (Bp. Porteus.) (Note, Is. liii. 11, 12.)

V. 39—44. Whilst the holy and divine Saviour was suspended in this most ignominious and excruciating posture, the multitudes that passed by, knowing for what he was crucified, reviled and derided him in every way which they could devise; reproaching him with having spoken of destroying the temple, and rebuilding it in three days; and calling on him in derision to break loose, and come down from the cross, if he were the Son of God. From an ignorant and unprincipled rabble such behaviour might the less be wondered at: but the very priests, even the chief of them, and the learned men and rulers of the nation, forgetful of their character, office, education, and authority, and suffering their disdainful rage to overcome all regard to decorum, joined the multitude, and led them on to insult and mock the meek and bleeding Jesus. They reproached him with his miracles, allowing that he saved the lives of others, yet deriding him as unable to save his own. It was indeed an important truth, that if he would save sinners from eternal misery, he could not save himself from these exquisite sufferings and this ignominious death; but they understood it not. They treated all other proofs of his being the Messiah with contempt, and called upon him, if he were indeed the King of Israel, to come down from the cross, and then they would believe in him. Not that this would have convinced them, for his resurrection had no such effect; but assuring themselves that he could not, they grew more hardened in unbelief, and used this cruel sarcasm to increase his anguish. Nay, they reproached him for his confidence in God, and challenged the Lord himself to deliver him, if he had any delight in him, seeing he had called himself the Son of God. Pro-

bably they did not know, that in this daring impiety, enmity, and blasphemy, they used the very words, which the prophet had put into the mouths of the murderers of the Messiah a thousand years before! (Note, Ps. xxii. 8.) To complete this unparalleled scene, even the thieves that were crucified with him could find a heart, in the midst of their own agonies and the horrid prospect that lay before them, to join the general voice, and to upbraid the crucified Jesus with his claim to be the Messiah and the Son of God. Though they suffered for notorious crimes, they escaped this obloquy and insult, and were regarded as objects of compassion; and even they could look down on Jesus with disdain and derision! The evangelists Matthew and Mark speak as if both the malefactors had been guilty of this outrage; but whether more than one of them be meant, will hereafter be considered. (Note, Luke xlii. 39—43.) We may challenge universal history to furnish another instance, in which any person, expiring under the tortures of a cruel execution, was treated with such derision, contempt and mockery, by all ranks and orders of men, and even by one at least of his fellow-sufferers. This was reserved for the holy Jesus, "the Brightness of the Father's glory, and the express Image of his Person," "God manifest in the flesh;" and this transaction is a full demonstration of man's rancorous enmity to the holy image, truth, and law of his Creator; and a sufficient confutation of all the flattering representations of proud moralists and philosophers, who know more of every thing, than of God and of themselves. Indeed, prophets and martyrs, who have been renewed to some measure of the same image, and have stood up for the same truths, have met with an adequate proportion of the same treatment; but it has been confined to them, and malefactors have been exempted from it. The perfect patience and meekness of this holy Sufferer, in the midst of such provocations which he was well able to avenge, is also worthy of our peculiar attention.

V. 45. It is here supposed, and will hereafter be shown, that Christ was nailed to the cross at the third hour, or by nine o'clock in the morning: but this darkness did not begin before the sixth hour, or noon; and it lasted till the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon. As the moon was then at the full, it could not be an eclipse from a natural cause; and probably it reached no further than the holy land, at least the language of the evangelists implies no more. The sun, however, seems to have been entirely obscured, and his beams intercepted; whence arose a most extraordinary and awful gloom. This was an

b. Mark xv. 34.
Luke xxi. 14.
John x. x. 24.
c. 10. 10. 1. 7.
c. 10. 10. 1. 7.
c. 10. 10. 1. 7.

46 And about the ninth hour, ^b Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, ^c Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

d. xi. 14. Mal. iv.
e. Mark xv. 35.
36.

47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, ^a This man calleth for Elias.

48 And straightway one of them ran,

apt emblem of the state of the spiritual world, when the Sun of Righteousness and the Light of men was under an eclipse; his soul being full of darkness, and horror, his character wounded with reproaches and loaded with infamy, and his body ready to expire with tortures. It was also an awful indication of the frown of heaven on the Jews and their rulers, who were guilty of this most enormous crime, from which the sun seemed to hide his astonished face, refusing his light to that land where it was committed. Some infidels have greatly exulted, because Josephus and the Pagan writers have not mentioned this phenomenon; but none have attempted to deny it, and every writer notices and records what he sees proper. Josephus and the Pagan authors were in general as little disposed to bear a favourable testimony to Christianity, as modern infidels are: the former could not but have heard of it, and his silence may be considered as the effect of his inability to deny the fact, and his unwillingness to admit the proper conclusion; but the heathen authors would probably treat the report with contempt and neglect, as unworthy of regard. It is deserving of notice, that all the evangelists record the scoffs and insults of the spectators, before they mention this darkness, which, it is probable, for the time, alarmed and silenced them. Many things have been conjectured concerning the intenseness of this gloom; but little can be known; probably it was neither so intense, nor so slight, as different writers, contending with each other, have represented it. There is no proof, that during it Jesus saw and spoke to his mother and the apostle John, at a considerable distance, as some have supposed; for nothing appears from the narrative, why this might not take place either during the three hours which preceded the gloom, or just before Jesus expired, when it seems to have terminated. We have, however, the testimony of three evangelists, authenticated by miracles and prophecy, that such a darkness took place; and we may be sure it was sufficiently intense, to convince considerate persons that it was an awful token of the wrath of God against the crucifiers of the holy Jesus.

V. 46. At the ninth hour, our Lord, (being probably oppressed with the same inward anguish and horror, as when in the garden,) cried out aloud, "Eli, Eli," or *Eloi, Eloi*, "lama, sabachthani," that is to say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (*Note, P. xxii. 1.*) The words are not exactly the same as they stand in the original of the psalm referred to, and they are supposed to be quoted in the Syro-Chaldaic dialect; but the meaning is precisely the same. This doleful exclamation of Jesus showed, that the total want of the light of God's countenance on his soul, and the sense of his frown and wrath against him as our Surety, were far more dreadful than all his complicated outward sufferings; that his confidence in his Father, together with

and took a sponge, ^a and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.

49 The rest said, Let be. ^c Let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

50 Jesus, ^e when he had cried again with a loud voice, ^b yielded up the ghost.

(43.)
b. Mark xv. 37.
John xxi. 46.
John x. 0.
P. xx. 14. 14.
14. 14. 14. 14.
14. 14. 14. 14.
14. 14. 14. 14.
14. 14. 14. 14.

his love, zeal, submission, and every holy affection, were unabated and most perfect, even in that dreadful hour; and that there was no cause in him why he should be thus forsaken, it being wholly through his willing answerableness for the sins of his people. 'This he did in a deep sense of his Father's wrath unto mankind, in whose stead he now underwent that which was due for the sins of the whole world: while he said, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" implying that God had for the time withdrawn from him the sense and vision of his comfortable presence; and while he said, "My God," implying the strength of his faith, whereby he did firmly apprehend the sure and gracious aid of his eternal Father.' (*Bp. Hall.*)

V. 47—49. Some of the persons present, who heard the words of Christ indistinctly, or who were not acquainted with the dialect in which they were spoken, supposed that he called upon Elias to come and rescue him: for, as it was understood that Elias was to be the fore-runner of the Messiah, they probably thought that he meant thus to assert his claim to that character, even to the last. About the same time he also said, "I thirst," being parched through excess of anguish and torture; and, as a vessel stood by filled with vinegar, (which being mixed with water, was commonly drunk by the Roman soldiers;) one of them filled a sponge with vinegar, and putting it on a reed, or a stalk of hyssop, reached it to him, that he might drink: whilst the rest said, "Let him alone, let us see whether Elias will come to save him." This seems to have been spoken in derision, and not from any expectation that Elias would actually come.

V. 50. (*Note, John xix. 28—30.*) Perhaps the darkness continued until Jesus said, "It is finished;" when the darkness and horror seem to have been removed from his mind; and an inexpressible joy in the sense of his Father's love, the near approach of his glory, and the blessed effects of his sufferings, to have filled his soul. He therefore immediately after, "Cried out with a loud voice, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." This has been generally supposed to be an indication that his strength was unbroken; and that when he yielded up the Ghost, or resigned his spirit, he did it voluntarily, "having power to lay down his life, and power to take it again." So that his soul could have left the body at the very beginning of his lingering agonies, had he so pleased, as these were necessary only for the expiation of our sins. 'This view of the case suggests an illustration of the love of Christ, manifested in his death, beyond what is commonly observed. Inasmuch as he did not use this power to quit the body, as soon as ever it was fastened to the cross, leaving only an insensible corpse to the cruelty of his murderers; but continued his abode in it, with a steady resolution, as long as it

11. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom: and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.

52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose.

53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

was proper; and then retired from it, with a majesty and dignity never known, or to be known, in any other death; dying, if I may so express it, like "the Prince of life." (*Doddridge*.)

V. 51—53. At that solemn time, the veil in the temple, which separated the most holy place from the other part of the sanctuary, was miraculously rent from top to bottom: this indicated, that the Mosaic dispensation was now virtually abolished, the types of the Levitical priesthood accomplished, the way into the holiest laid open, and the distinction between Jew and Gentile terminated, through that oblation which had just been offered. As this was the hour of the evening-sacrifice, some of the priests must have been in the temple burning incense, at the time when it happened; and the rest of them, and even Caiaphas himself, must afterwards have seen the veil that had been rent: yet this prodigy made no impression on their hardened hearts, any more than the other events of that surprising day. This insensibility, amidst such astonishing miracles, appears to some persons almost incredible, and even beyond what human nature, depraved as it is, seems capable of. But it should be considered, that the most alarming and amazing scenes gradually lose their effect on the mind, when persons become familiar with them. Men live among the dead and dying, often without terror or reflection; and in an age, when miracles were frequently wrought, many spectators would by habit grow familiar with them, as men do with scenes of carnage and desolation. Especially when the astonishment, at first excited by witnessing a miracle, was attended by a conviction, which was resisted and turned from with deep aversion, and when every subsequent miracle was followed by a similar process. The minds of those, who thus "rebelled against the light," would of course be employed, with all the ingenuity which they possessed, in accounting for the wonderful events, without owning the hand of God in them, or the conclusion to be drawn from them in favour of the Teacher, whose doctrine condemned their conduct, and was contrary to their prejudices and their ambition, avarice, and wickedness. Thus the heart and conscience would gradually become more and more callous, as if "seared with a hot iron;" and God in awful justice would give the obstinate rebels up to judicial hardness and blindness. So that in an age of miracles, it is highly reasonable to expect, that the opposers of the truth, thus divinely attested before their eyes, should become obdurate and insensible to a degree, which to those who never witnessed miracles must be inconceivable. (*Notes*, Ex. iv. 21. vii. 13. ix. 12. xiv. 4.) At the time when the veil was rent, there was also an earthquake, which

54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God."

55 Now many women were there, beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him;

56 Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James

rented the rocks in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and even opened the sepulchres in a very extraordinary manner: and after the resurrection of Christ, many of the bodies of departed saints, or holy persons who had fallen asleep in the faith, arose, came forth out of their graves, entered into Jerusalem, and appeared to several persons who knew them. Probably they were such believers as had died not long before, and now arose after Christ, as it were, to grace his resurrection. It would, however, be wrong to indulge vain curiosity, by further inquiring who they were; but as they are said to have "appeared to many," and, not to have continued with them, it seems probable that they also went to heaven, with or after their ascended Saviour. This was a most extraordinary event; and doubtless it was generally spoken of in Jerusalem by those to whom they appeared.

V. 54. The earthquake, and the other wonders that attended the crucifixion of Christ, together with his mild and patient behaviour under his sufferings, and the cheerful confidence with which he commended his departing soul into the hands of God, had a great effect upon the minds of the Roman soldiers, though the Jewish rulers remained unimpressed. Only four soldiers were employed in nailing Jesus to the cross, but a considerable number, commanded by a Centurion, watched him whilst he hung there. These were greatly alarmed at what they saw and heard, and they glorified God, perhaps by confessing their guilt, and deprecating his vengeance; and they acknowledged, that "Truly this was the Son of God." It is not to be supposed, that the soldiers who joined with the Centurion in this confession, and who seem to have been the same who had crowned Jesus with thorns and mocked him, should understand the full meaning of these words; yet we may reasonably conclude, that this conviction terminated in the conversion of at least some of them; and perhaps of the very persons who nailed him to the cross: according to his prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (*Note*, Luke xxiii. 34.)—Some would interpret the words recorded by Matthew, "Truly this was the Son of God," by those of Luke, "This was a righteous man." But in fact that expression is explained by *this*; for as Jesus was crucified for saying that he was "the Son of God;" so, if he were a righteous man and unjustly condemned, he must be the Son of God. (*Marg. Ref.*) Thus Jesus was put to death upon pretence of blasphemy; for that he gave himself out for the Son of God: but these things plainly show that he said nothing but truth of himself. (*Bp. Hall*.)

xv. 20. 21.
a Mark xv 42.
47 Luke xxi
51 John xix
38-42.

b 1 Sam. i. vii
17

c Mark xvi 44-
52. 53. Luke xxi.
52, 53.

d Is. liii. 9.

e 66. xxviii. 2.
Mark xvi 3. 4.
Luke xxiv. 2.
John xx. 1
f 56.

and Jose^s, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

57 ¶ When the even was come, ^a there came a rich man of ^b Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disci- ple :

58 He went to Pilate, ^c and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

60 And laid it ^d in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock ; and he rolled ^e a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

61 And there was ^f Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

62 ¶ Now the next day that followed

the day of the preparation, ^g the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

63 Saying, Sir, we remember that ^h that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, ⁱ After three days I will rise again.

64 Command therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead : ^j so the last error shall be worse than the first.

65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch : go your way, ^k make it as sure as ye can.

66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, ^l sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

xviii. 17 Mark
xv. 42. Luke
xxiii. 56-56.
John xxi. 1. 42.
h 1. 2. Ps. ii. 1-6.
i Acts v. 27. 28.
j Luke xxi. 2.
John vi. 12. 47.
2 Cor. vi. 8

k xvi. 21. xvii.
Ps. xxi. 1. xxi.
61 Mark vii.
31. x. 34. Luke
ix. 22. xxi. 33.
xxiv. 6. 7. John
ii. 19.

l xii. 45.

m xxviii. 11-15.
John xxi. 10.
Prov. xxi. 30.

n Dan. vi. 17. 2
Tim. ii. 19.

V. 55, 56. Among the witnesses of this melancholy and interesting scene, there were some women, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, and had waited on him, supplying his wants from their substance. (*Marg. Ref.*) Anxious concern and affection induced them to be present ; and perhaps they stood afar off, for fear of the outrages of the multitude. Words cannot express, nay, imagination almost fails to conceive, the mixed emotions of love, reverence, gratitude, sorrow, compassion, anxiety, and despondency, which must have agitated their minds on this occasion. We find from John, who also was present, that Mary the mother of Jesus was a spectator of the distressing scene ; when a sword must indeed have pierced her heart and inmost soul.

V. 57-61. Joseph lived at Arimathea, or Ramah, the city of Samuel. (*Marg. Ref.*) He was a rich and honourable person ; a counsellor, or member of the sanhedrim ; and a pious man, who had not consented to the proceedings of the rulers against Jesus ; for he probably absented himself when this was agitated, finding he could not make any effectual resistance. He also "waited for the kingdom of God," expecting the Messiah as a spiritual Redeemer, and he had secretly become a disciple of Jesus ; but being timid, moving in a high rank in society, and knowing the malignity of the rulers, he had not openly confessed his faith. It pleased God to leave him thus far under the power of his unbelieving fears ; because he intended him for a service, from which he might have been precluded, if he had rendered himself obnoxious to the ruling powers. But when the courage of our Lord's stated followers failed them, he found himself animated to a more decided conduct ; and his faith being invigorated by the circumstances attending the death of Christ, he determined no longer to conceal his opinion. He, therefore, went boldly to Pilate, and desired leave to take the body of Jesus, that he might give it an honourable interment, and that it might not be buried on the spot, as those of malefactors generally were. Accordingly, when Pilate found that Jesus was dead, being convinced of his innocence, he did not hesitate to order that the body should

be delivered to Joseph ; though he must have known that this would be highly displeasing to the Jewish rulers. Having obtained this permission, and being assisted by Nicodemus, Joseph went and took the body of Jesus from the cross, wrapped it in linen cloth, with a quantity of myrrh, aloes, and other aromatics, which had been procured for that purpose, and immediately conveyed it into a new sepulchre, which he had prepared for himself. This was situated in a garden near the spot, and had been hewn out of the solid rock ; and there was only one entrance into it, which he closed with a large stone, when he had deposited the body of Jesus in it. The interment of Christ was thus hastily performed, because the Sabbath was near ; and probably Joseph and his friend proposed afterwards more carefully to embalm the body ; at the same time Mary Magdalene and the other Mary before mentioned witnessed the transaction, and formed their plan, for testifying their respect to the remains of their beloved and honoured Master. This burial of Christ was an accomplishment of a remarkable prophecy ; (*Note, Is. liii. 8, 9 ;*) and it made way for the more complete proof of his resurrection. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 62-66. Some think, that this occurred, as soon as the sun was set, after our Lord's crucifixion, when the sabbath entered. It is wonderful, that these most superstitious men, should not have scrupled to violate the rest of the sabbath, by sealing the sepulchre and placing a guard. (*Beza.*) The day that followed the crucifixion of our Lord was the sabbath, and peculiarly solemn, by reason of the feast of the passover which was then celebrating ; and the day on which he was crucified was observed as a preparation for it : yet the malicious zeal of the chief priests induced them to come, on that great solemnity, in a body to Pilate, to represent to him, that Jesus, (whom they confidently called that deceiver,) had said repeatedly during his life-time, that he would rise again on the third day. This had always been in connexion with predictions of his violent death ; and they paid more attention to it than the disciples did. As his

CHAP. XXVIII.

Early on the first day of the week, the women go to the sepulchre, 1. An earthquake, and an angel rolling away the stone, ter-

friends therefore had been permitted to bury him, the rulers desired that he would give orders to secure the sepulchre till the *third day*, (which shows what they understood by the words "after three days;") lest his disciples should come in a clandestine manner, steal away the body, spread the report that he was risen, and thus seduce the people into a more fatal error than ever. It was indeed very unlikely, that the terrified disciples, who in that case could expect no better usage than their Master had just received, would have either courage or inclination for such an imposture, if they had been wicked enough for it. This, however, was permitted providentially, in order to give the more indisputable demonstration of our Lord's resurrection. Pilate in answer observed to them, that they had a body of Roman soldiers at their command, who were stationed near the temple to keep watch there: of these they might take as many as they pleased, and such as they could most depend on, and secure the sepulchre as carefully as they could. Accordingly they went, and placed a strong guard at the sepulchre: affixing their seal to the stone that closed the mouth of it, that there might be no collusion between the soldiers and the disciples. Thus they were themselves satisfied, that they had made it sure by every needful precaution. 'The chief priests, having taken these precautions, waited, probably with no small impatience, for the third day after the crucifixion,—when they made no doubt they should find the body in the sepulchre, and convict Jesus of deceit and imposture.' (*Bp. Porteus.*) The number of the soldiers on guard is supposed to have been sixty.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—10.



Whilst wicked men pursue their primary object with unwearied assiduity, and sacrifice rest, indulgence, and every other interest, in order to secure it; let none of the servants of God remain inactive, or shrink from difficulty, in their work and labour of love. The advantages attainable by sin appear in prospect very desirable; but they contain far more bitterness than satisfaction, when actually possessed. Men foresee but little of the consequences of their crimes, at the time when they commit them; but they must be answerable for all: and the anguish and remorse of Judas, when he saw that Jesus was condemned, should impress our minds with some idea of what wicked men will feel hereafter, when they shall learn all the fatal effects of their infidelity, impiety, licentiousness, and iniquity. In this world, there is ground of hope for the most transgressors; and, when deeply convinced, they should be reminded, that their chief danger arises from temptations to despair of God's mercy. When faith and hope are totally wanting, repentance itself cannot be genuine; and the enemy, who once persuaded his deluded servants that their sins were small, and that they had nothing to fear, will at length perhaps take occasion

rify the guard, 2—4. The angel declares the resurrection of Jesus to the women, and orders them to tell the disciples, 5—8. Jesus himself appears to them, 9, 10. The priests hire the soldiers to say,

from some special aggravations of their crimes, to represent them to their affrighted imaginations as absolutely unpardonable, that he may drive them to desperate wickedness, or to suicide. For though he cannot himself destroy them, yet he hath great influence in urging them thus to plunge themselves beyond the reach of mercy: and God often gives up those especially into his power, who have sinned wilfully against much light and conviction. Many things which accompany true repentance, may yet be found where that is wanting: a deep remorse for atrocious crimes that have made dreadful inroads on the conscience, an open confession of sin in *some particulars*; and a restitution of the wages of iniquity, will not prove that man truly penitent, who is not humbled for all the sin of his heart and conduct; who does not rely solely on the mercy of God in Jesus Christ; or who does not learn to hate sin, to love God, to submit to his will, and to walk in newness of life. But no warnings can withdraw hardened hypocrites from their purpose: they will treat such accomplices, as show remorse for their crimes, with the most disdainful neglect, and concur with Satan in driving them to despair; and whilst they are deliberately perpetrating the most atrocious iniquities, they will keep up the appearance of devotion, pretend to most exact conscientiousness, and affect the praise of beneficence! And God sometimes perpetuates the memory of their crimes, and fulfils the prophecies of his word, by means of those very actions in which they most deliberately rebelled against him. But of how small estimation must spiritual excellency be among men, when even Israelites valued the divine Saviour at no more than the price of the meanest slave!

V. 11—18.



Who can reflect on the malice, envy, dissimulation, and murderous rage of the Jewish priests and rulers; or on the prevaricating cowardly injustice of Pilate; or on the conduct of the multitude, in preferring a murderer to the holy Jesus, and in clamorously demanding his crucifixion; or the insults and cruelty of the soldiers; without horror and indignation? But let us not deem these any other than a fair specimen of human nature; let us not imagine that the Lord of glory would meet with better usage, if he were now to appear on earth in *disguise*, and to testify of his nominal disciples, "that their works were evil," in the same manner that he did of the Jews. Still he would be despised and rejected of men, and meet with decided opposition; still numbers would pursue him with revilings and cruel mockings; and others would be afraid, or ashamed, to acknowledge their relation to him: still there would be found chief priests, scribes, rulers, and pharisees, whose hypocrisy and ignorance he had exposed, whose consciences he had galled, and whose authority and reputation he had undermined, to persecute him with unrelenting malice and revenge: still there would be ungodly Pilate, who, being persuaded of his innocency, and know-

that the disciples had stolen the body while they slept, 11—15. Jesus appears to the disciples in Galilee, 16, 17. He sends

them to preach to, and baptize, all nations, and promises his presence with his church to the end of the world, 18—20.

ing that he was persecuted from envy, would yet deem it impolitic to risk any thing in his cause; and after some feeble efforts to stem the torrent, or to throw the blame on others, would prostitute authority, to sanction the unrighteous decrees of his enemies: still the unstable multitude would to-day cry *Hosanna*, and to-morrow *Crucify him*: still hardened scoffers would divert themselves with his ignominy and anguish; and even wretches would be found, that would try to forget their own misery by reviling him. But are we not all concerned? Alas, how often is Barabbas preferred to Jesus! When sinners reject his salvation, that they may retain their darling sins, which rob God of his glory, and murder their own souls, they repeat the disgraceful transaction: when the society of pious ministers and Christians is forsaken for the company of profligates and infidels, the preference is of the same nature: and indeed we are all apt in some instances and in some measure to prefer the friendship and interests of this evil world to the commands, glory, and approbation of the Son of God. But we must also remember, that he was wounded for our transgressions: in this sense we are all chargeable with the guilt of his crucifixion: and our sins were as the scourge, the thorns, and the nails, by which he suffered. When his disciples act contrary to their character, and cause his enemies to revile or deride, they then deliver up the blessed Jesus to be again mocked, spitted on, crowned with thorns, and loaded with every indignity: whilst they, who treat his followers with cruelty and contempt, act over again the part of the Roman soldiers, and the Jewish rulers and people: and when professed Christians openly apostatize, “they crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” Embittered persecutors are often so hurried away by their furious zeal, that even infidels can discern the malignant principles by which they are actuated; and the people of God may expect more favour from the most avowed profligates, than from hypocrites.

V. 19—25.

The warnings which God sends, by various means, to deter men from wickedness, by various means, to deter men from wickedness, will eventually leave many of them the more inexcusable: but what will be the guilt and condemnation of those, who use authority, influence, and ingenuity, to set men against the Gospel, and thus ruin multitudes of immortal souls? Various and irrational are the means, by which men seek impunity, in acting contrary to their own consciences: they sometimes pretend necessity or compulsion, when nothing but unbelief, fear of man, and regard to worldly interest, compel them: and they often throw the blame on others, vainly hoping to have the *advantage* of iniquity themselves, and to leave the punishment to be suffered by their tempters! But all the water in the ocean cannot wash away the guilt of murder from those rulers, who, even reluctantly, permit innocent blood to be shed for political purposes, as it is their bounden duty at all hazards to protect the oppressed. Such as are bent upon evil are commonly most clamorous, when their conduct is most unreasonable; persecutors are generally

most ready to call for the instruments of torture or death, when it is inquired “What evil have these persons done?” And in every case, when arguments are wanting, men are prone to abound in vociferation, to silence both their opponents and their own consciences. But who can reflect without terror on the awful imprecation of the Jewish multitude, and its tremendous accomplishment? What miseries did they call for on themselves! What a legacy did they leave to their remote posterity! Yet there is mercy in reserve for a remnant of that nation: let us then pray for them, that at length they may look to him, whom they have pierced, and mourn for their sins, in true repentance and with living faith. But all who delight in anathemas and imprecations will find that they rebound upon themselves.

V. 26—44.

Under trivial injuries we worthless creatures are prone to complain bitterly, and even to retort or retaliate on those who offend us: but the holy and divine Saviour endured the most complicated indignities and cruelties without a murmur, a menace, or an angry word! In the meekness and dignity of heavenly wisdom, he heard unmoved the false accusations with which he was followed; the preference given to a murderer before him; the ungrateful people, whose diseases he had healed, and whose wants he had supplied, demanding his crucifixion; the iniquitous sentence passed on him; and the sarcasms and cruel derision of the soldiers, the people, the rulers, and even of the malefactors. Without the least impatience, he suffered his sacred body to be torn with the scourge, his head to be wounded with the thorns, and his hands and feet to be pierced: and thus he met the horrors of the most excruciating death, and the shame of being numbered amongst the vilest of criminals, with the most entire resignation to his Father's will, the most ardent love and zeal for his glory, and the deepest compassion even for his cruel murderers. He was also as much superior to fear, as to anger or impatience; and he supported his most complicated sufferings, with a gravity, a sensibility, and a fortitude, equally distant from the ill-timed disgusting levity, which some have shown in the prospect of immediate death, and the sullen affectation of insensibility, which others have displayed: so that all which hath been admired in the death of heroes or philosophers, is no more comparable to the setting of this Sun of Righteousness, than the glimmering taper is to the clear light of the day. But let us especially consider this conduct of the Saviour as our pattern; and recollect that all our fretfulness, peevishness, bitterness, and despondency, are indeed acts of rebellion, which could not have been pardoned, but through the shedding of his precious blood. Let us remember, that we are called to *do good and suffer evil* in this present world: let us keep a guard over our spirits and at the door of our lips, when we are injured, insulted, and afflicted: let us consider how light our afflictions are, and how mixed with consolations, when compared with those of our

a. MARK xvi. 1, 2
John xxi. 1, 2
Matt. xx. 1, 2
xxi. 1.

N ^a the end of the sabbath, as it began, to dawn towards the first day of the

week, came ^b Mary Magdalene and the ^c other Mary to see the sepulchre. b. xxvi. 56. c. 1.

divine Surety; and let us never expect, nor desire, kind usage from such persons as crucified the Lord of glory.

V. 45—50.

Our blessed Redeemer endured all his other complicated sufferings in silent submission: but the frown and wrath of the Father, which he bore for our sins, extorted the doleful exclamation, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” What then will be the misery of those, who shall for ever be forsaken by God and sink under his wrath in absolute despair? The believer, who has tasted a few drops of the cup which the Saviour drank off to the very dregs in the garden and on the cross; who has lost for a season the comfort of communion with God, and fears coming finally short of his favour, and is oppressed with a sense of his displeasure; can frame some feeble conceptions on this awful subject: and thence he learns to judge of the immensity of the Saviour’s love; thence he acquires deeper convictions of the evil and desert of sin, and of his obligations to him, “who hath delivered us from the wrath to come;” and thence he is led to consider the words, “Depart from me,” which unbelievers little regard or dread, as more tremendous even than the unquenchable fire prepared for the devil and his angels.—But how must adoring angels have been filled with astonishment, when they witnessed their incarnate Lord and Creator thus despised and hated by sinful men! Nothing could more astonish these holy spectators, than the madness and wickedness of his foes; except it were his patience in bearing with them, when his frown must at once have sunk them into hell; his compassion for the souls of those who were by nature so deeply depraved, in thus agonizing and dying for them; and his power and grace, in thus triumphing over the prince of darkness, even in that deepest scene of his humiliation. Thus were the purposes and prophecies of God accomplished; thus was his law magnified, his justice satisfied, and his holiness displayed; thus was the way opened for us sinners to the throne of grace now, and to the kingdom of glory hereafter. Yet never were the horrid nature and effects of sin so tremendously displayed, from the creation of the world to this time, nor ever shall be, as on that important day, when the beloved Son of the Father hung upon the cross, “suffering once for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” So great was the wickedness then committed, that the sun might well hide his astonished head, the earth be clothed with sable, and nature herself be thrown into convulsions, as in sympathy with her expiring Lord. Our God will not grant presumptuous unbelievers those proofs of the truth of his word, which they arrogantly require, and with which they would by no means be satisfied: but he will give to every inquirer such as are proper, in his own time and manner; and he will deliver, and receive to himself, all those who trust in him, however men may deride their confidence, as his children: their trials may be sharp, and appear tedious; and at some times, they may cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” But they will be enabled at last to say, “Into thy hands I commend my spirit, for thou hast received me, O Lord, thou God of Truth.”

V. 51—56.

Our divine Saviour hath by dying deprived death of its terrific sting, and removed all obstructions to the happiness of his people. He hath consecrated the grave to be the quiet repository of the bodies of his sleeping saints, and hath prepared for its future opening again, to restore them, immortal and glorious, by his resurrection, as the first fruits of that glorious harvest; that they may for ever inhabit the holy city above, “where is fulness of joy at his right hand for evermore.” We may also reflect with comfort on the abundant attestations that were given to the character of the calumniated Jesus; in that all concerned in his death were constrained to say, “This was a righteous man,” “This was the King of Israel,” “Truly this was the Son of God:” and we also, exercising ourselves to have a conscience void of offence, may leave it to the Lord to vindicate our reputations. Let us at the same time ever keep our faith fixed on every illustration of that truth, that “where sin hath abounded, grace much more abounds;” observing that ignorant idolaters are far more frequently brought to glorify God, and confess faith in his Son, than proud Pharisees and hypocrites. As “God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?” Hereby we know his love to sinful men: may we then prove our love to him, by crucifying our lusts, and resigning our dearest earthly comforts, at his word, for his glory, or in submission to his providence. In short, let us not only *usurp off*, but as near as we can, contemplate this affecting scene; that our hearts may be melted with godly sorrow, weaned from this world, encouraged in hope, animated by love, admiration, and gratitude; that we may glory in his cross alone, and be induced to yield up ourselves most willingly to his service.

V. 57—66.

The Lord hath a chosen remnant among various descriptions of men: and whilst we find a Judas among the apostles, and a Joseph in the Jewish sanhedrim, we should learn not to condemn whole societies for the crimes, or to sanction them for the good conduct, of an individual belonging to them. The heart-searching Saviour knows even his secret disciples: and though we cannot excuse the timidity of such, as for a time are afraid of confessing him before his inveterate enemies, yet we should make allowances for difficult situations, and approve of conscientiousness and holy singularity in men surrounded by the worst of examples: nor must we despise the day of small things. But we should especially adore the mysteries of divine wisdom, in preparing men for particular services in his Church; and the sovereign power of his grace, which sometimes gives courage to the fearful, when the most intrepid are intimidated. Thus he provides for the honour of his name and the support of his cause, and defeats the purposes of his most implacable and potent adversaries. Let us then be willing to be accounted deceivers, and to pass “through evil report and good report,” as our

John x. 13-15. *Red Ray.*
 Heb. i. 14. — l xii. 49. xvi. 21. xvii. 9. 23. xx. 19. xxvi. 31, 32. xxvii. 63. Mark viii.
 31. Luke xxiv. 6-8. 33, 41. John ii. 19. x. 17. — m Mark xvi. 6. Luke xxiv. 12.
 John x. 4-9.

10 Then said Jesus unto them, ^x Be not afraid: ^y go tell ^z my brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

11 ¶ Now when they were going, behold, ^a some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

12 And ^b when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

14 And if this come to the governor's ears, ^c we will persuade him, and secure you.

15 So ^d they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews ^e until this day.

16 ¶ Then ^f the eleven disciples ^g went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

17 And when they saw him, they ^h worshipped him: ⁱ but some doubted.

18 ¶ And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, ^k All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

a. d. xxviii. 15-16

b. xxvi. 1-13
c. l. 1-13
d. l. 1-13
e. l. 1-13
f. l. 1-13
g. l. 1-13
h. l. 1-13
i. l. 1-13
j. l. 1-13
k. l. 1-13

- Acts xii. 19.

V. 11-15. 'The more the sun shineth, the more are the wicked blinded,' (*Beza.*) 'It may be said, that this account is the representation of friends, of those who were interested in asserting the reality of the resurrection; but that there is probably another story told by the opposite party, which may set the matter in a different point of view; and that before we can judge fairly of the question, we must hear what they have to say of it. This is certainly very proper and reasonable. There is, we acknowledge, another account given by the Jews; and the sacred historians tell us what this 'opposite story was.' (*Bp. Porteus.*) It should also be observed, that this is the *only* account given of these transactions by the opposite party; at least, no other is extant, (nor do we read of any other in ancient writers;) except what is contained in the verses under consideration. The Roman soldiers seem to have been the first who gave intimations of the resurrection of Jesus. Probably some of them retired to their quarters, or into the city, and dispersed uncertain rumours of what had passed; whilst their leaders went to make their report to the chief priests and rulers. It is not conceivable, but that the latter must have been convinced that the events were miraculous, and afraid that Jesus was indeed risen again, as he had predicted: but they had engaged all their credit and authority in this unequal contest; they could not think of submitting or receding; and there was no other way left, but to conceal, if possible, what had taken place. They therefore deliberated on the subject, and could devise no better project, than to bribe the soldiers to deny the facts which they had reported, and to propagate an absurd falsehood instead of them: and as the soldiers had no serious convictions that they were any ways concerned in these transactions, they bargained for a large sum of money, and agreed to accuse the disciples of having stolen the body when they were asleep. At the same time the rulers undertook to secure them from punishment, if Pilate should be informed that they had slept on duty, which was death by the Roman law. Accordingly they took the money and said what they were desired; and this report was circulated with such diligence and success, that it was commonly current among the Jews when Matthew wrote his Gospel. Yet was it a falsehood that confuted itself, and was the most effectual acknowledgment of the obstinacy and malice of those who invented it, that can be imagined. Had all the soldiers been asleep, they could not have known any thing which passed: if some were awake, why did they not

alarm the others? Moreover, if they had slept, they would not have dared to mention it; and if it had been discovered, the Jewish rulers would certainly have done their utmost to bring them to condign punishment: and had there been the least shadow of probability in the accusation, they would assuredly have prosecuted the apostles with the most unrelenting vengeance; for their credit and authority were deeply concerned: so that this *single omission* was a full demonstration, that they did not believe one word of the report which they so industriously circulated. It was also improbable in the extreme, that the intimidated apostles and disciples should attempt such an action, which would have been excessively rash, even in the most experienced soldiers: it was still more improbable, that they should succeed; and if they had, reproach, torture, and death, were the whole recompense which they could possibly have expected. But in fact the Jewish rulers were determined not to confess the truth: and as they knew not what to say, they were reduced to a distressing necessity of circulating one of the most senseless lies that ever was devised.

V. 16, 17. Several appearances of Christ are here passed over in silence; but his meeting with his disciples, by appointment, in Galilee, is particularly mentioned. Most of them were inhabitants of that district; and probably this was the time when he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once. (1 Cor. xv. 6.) The place appointed for this purpose was a mountain, perhaps Tabor, on which he had been transfigured. When the disciples saw him, and were satisfied that he was really risen from the dead, they worshipped him as the Son of God and the Lord of all. But there were some who doubted at the first, yet probably they were at length convinced. As all the apostles had before this repeatedly seen him, and as even incredulous Thomas had been fully satisfied of his resurrection, we cannot understand this of any of them, but of some of the five hundred brethren that were gathered together on this occasion. 'This circumstance shows the scrupulous fidelity of the sacred historians, who fairly tell you every thing that passed, on this and similar occasions, whether it appears to make for them or against them.' (*Bp. Porteus.*)

V. 18. It is not certain, whether what is next recorded took place in Galilee, or after the return of the disciples to Jerusalem, and just before our Lord's ascension. He, however, came, and conversed with them of "those things that pertained to the kingdom of God;" and in-

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19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

formed them, that in consequence of his humiliation, he was now invested with all authority, in heaven and earth, over angels and men, in regulating the course of Providence, and in communicating all spiritual blessings, for the benefit of his Church. 'The word here is *authority*, not *power*: but it is manifest that these differ from each other; for many are not able to perform those things which they have a right to do; and on the contrary, many have power to do those things which they have no right to do.' (*Beza*.) This *authority* is given to Christ, as Emmanuel, as the Son of Man, and as Mediator: but did he not possess all divine perfections, how could he exercise it? 'He to whom any office is committed must have sufficient power and wisdom to discharge that office. Now to govern all things in heaven and earth belongs only to him, who is the Lord and Maker of them.'—'To have power over death, and to be able to raise the dead, is to have that power, which is proper to God alone: and to have power over the souls of men and the knowledge of all hearts belongs to God alone.' (*Whitby*.)

V. 19, 20. After this solemn declaration of his sovereign authority over all creatures, received in human nature from the Father, our Lord proceeded to commission the apostles especially, but certainly his other ministers and disciples also, according to their several stations in the Church, to propagate his religion: "among all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The apostles were, however, so much under the influence of Jewish prejudices, that they did not understand this commission as authorizing them to preach to the Gentiles, till a considerable time after the descent of the Holy Ghost! There are two words in this passage, that are translated *teach*, and *teaching*; but they are of a different meaning. The former is of the same import with that which is rendered *disciples*, and it means that general instruction, which was necessary to bring men to profess themselves the disciples of Christ; and the other relates to their more particular subsequent instruction in all the various parts of Christianity. As the words might have stood in the same order, if it had been a command to 'go, and convert all nations to Judaism, circumcising them in the name of the God of Israel, and teaching them to observe the law of Moses;' so no argument can hence be fairly adduced respecting the *subjects* of baptism. For in this case it would have been understood, that the adult males must be circumcised, on a profession of the Jewish religion, and their infant-offspring at the time appointed; and in like manner all adults admitted into the Church, from among the Jews and Gentiles, must be instructed in Christianity before they were baptized; though their infant-offspring might be baptized also: and the case is exactly the same still. The general nature of baptism hath already

things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

11. In 2. 1 John ii. 3. 4. 11. 12. 21. Rev. xxi. 1. — p. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

been explained; (*Note*, iii. 6 :) but we have here an account of the appropriation of this institution to the Christian dispensation. The apostles and preachers of the Gospel were ordered to baptize those who embraced the Gospel, into the *name*, (not *names*) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. This is a most irrefragable proof of the doctrine of the Trinity; that is, of the Deity of the Son, and of the distinct personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit: for it would be absurd to suppose, that a mere man, or creature, or a mere *modus* or quality of God, should be joined with the Father in the *one name*, into which all Christians are baptized. To be baptized into the name of any one, implies a professed dependence on him and devoted subjection to him; to be baptized therefore "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," implies a professed dependence on these three divine Persons, jointly and equally, and a devoting of ourselves to them as worshippers and servants. This is proper and obvious, upon the supposition of the mysterious unity of three coequal Persons in the unity of the Godhead; but not to be accounted for upon any other principles. Christianity is the religion of a sinner, who relies for salvation from wrath and sin, and all evil, on the mercy of the Father, through the Person and atonement of the incarnate Son, and by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit; and who in consequence gives up himself to be the worshipper and servant of the triune JEHOVAH, in all his ordinances and commandments; that, according to the ancient and excellent doxology, 'Glory may be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.' Baptism is an outward sign of that inward washing, or sanctification of the Spirit, which seals and evidences the believer's justification. When an adult is baptized, he avows his acceptance of this salvation, and makes this surrender of himself to the service of God his Saviour. When we bring our infant-offspring to be baptized, we express our earnest desire, that they may share the same benefits, and be the redeemed worshippers and servants of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; we renew our own profession of faith, and devotedness to this one God in three Persons: and we pledge ourselves to God and his Church, to use proper means to "bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" in hope of their being made partakers of the inward and spiritual grace of baptism. As far as these things are attended to, they have a most salutary effect both on parents and children; and this ordinance helps to keep up the remembrance of the principal doctrines of Christianity, in all places where it is used.—There can be no reasonable doubt, but that the apostles and primitive Christians always administered baptism, in this very form: and it would be strange to infer their disobedience to so express a command of Christ, from

the brevity with which such matters are recorded in the Acts of the apostles. Indeed it would be a most daring presumption in any man to alter it, as if he knew better than the Lord himself, in what manner to administer the ordinance. When our Lord had appointed baptism, and directed the apostles in respect of the subsequent instruction of their converts; (which demands our most careful and obedient consideration, as his parting command to his ministers;) being about to depart from them, as to his visible presence, he said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." He did not say, *to death*, or *to eternity*; for that might have been restricted personally to the apostles; but, *to the end of the world*: which includes all succeeding ministers, congregations, and disciples, in every age and nation, even to the consummation of all things. He is with us, in the power of his protecting providence, by the influences of his teaching, sanctifying, and comforting Spirit, and in the communication of all spiritual blessings from the favour of his omnipresent Deity; and we should realize him with us, in secret and in social worship, and in our public assemblies. (Note, xviii. 20.) To this the word *Amen* is affixed, probably by the evangelist, as expressing his desire that it might be so; and perhaps to lead the reader to convert the promise into a prayer for himself and every part of the Church.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-10.

Our God can with infinite ease accomplish his promises, by methods which are beyond the expectations of his friends, as well as in defiance of all his enemies. Let us with joy contemplate the divine Saviour bursting the barriers of the grave, and triumphing over "the king of terrors," by his glorious resurrection. Thus he proved himself the Son of God and the King of Israel; he evinced the sufficiency and acceptance of his atoning sacrifice; and he became the First-fruits from the dead, and the Author of spiritual and eternal life to his people. Vain were the precautions of the Jewish rulers; vain the stone, the seal, the guard of valiant soldiers! They only served to render the illustrious event more incontestable. But if the earthquake and a single angel could so terrify these Romans, whose courage has been renowned through every age and nation; where will the wicked appear, when the same power shall raise the dead, destroy the visible creation, and be displayed, to judge the world? Yet the humble, weeping penitents, that in faith and love seek Jesus who was crucified, to be saved through his precious blood, and employed in his service, need fear none of these things. None can so accuse them, as to compass their condemnation; for Jesus who died for them is risen again, and ever liveth to plead their cause: all holy angels are their friends and guardians, and neither earth nor hell, life nor death, can hurt them. Whilst they behold the place where the dear Redeemer lay, they find themselves gradually reconciled to death and the grave, and inspired with the hopes of a glorious resurrection, and with the joyful expectation, that "when he shall appear, then shall they also appear with him in glory." We are now called to rejoice with our risen Lord, as we not long since were to sympathize in his sufferings, and attend his funeral: let us then delight to tell to all around us, that the Lord is risen indeed, and

perfected to be "the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him." The believer, however, will not always be able to divest himself for fear, even when he hath the most abundant cause for joy; and he may think himself highly favoured in this present world, if hope and cheerfulness generally prevail. Whilst we endeavour to obey the word sent us by the servants of our Lord, he will manifest himself unto us, dispel our fears, confer blessings, and cause us to worship him with adoring love and joyful gratitude: for notwithstanding his majesty and purity, and our meanness and unworthiness, and many offences, he still condescends to call us his brethren!

V. 11-20.

The malice of proud persecutors cannot be overcome by any demonstration: even avarice will expend large sums, to silence the evidence of the truth and to propagate error; policy will adopt the most foolish measures in such a cause; and reasoning infidels will swallow the most absurd falsehoods with a stupid credulity! We must not impute such things to the weakness of men's understandings, but to the malice of their hearts, and to the judicial blindness to which God hath given them up. Thus he leaves them to expose their own cause, and to give a constrained testimony to his truth. But they who are teachable, and impartially seek to know the ways of God, shall be admitted to clearer and fuller discoveries of the truth from time to time; and at length their perplexities shall be all removed, by what they see, hear, and experience in their own souls. Being then compassed with such numerous witnesses of our Redeemer's resurrection, let us be ever ready to meet him in all his appointed ordinances, for the fuller establishment of our faith and hope: and let us often contemplate him as now possessed of all power in heaven and earth, for the benefit of his Church. He hath sent his Gospel into this distant nation, to call us to be his disciples; and most of us have been "baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" let us then examine whether we really possess 'the inward and spiritual grace of a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness,' by which the children of wrath become the children of God? Let us seek to experience more fully the salvation of our triune God, and to be more entirely devoted to his service and worship; and let us bring up our families, as those who desire more, far more, that they may be Christians, than that they should be rich, learned, or honourable, in the world. Let ministers also observe to act always under the commission, and according to the instructions, of the great Head of the Church and Lord of all: let them still preach the Gospel to all around them, administering sacred ordinances by the rule of sacred Scripture; and teaching the people, not only a few doctrines, but to observe all things whatever Christ hath commanded them. It is not indeed now personally present with us, and miraculous gifts have ceased; but he is yet spiritually among us, to assist and bless us in our studies and labours, public and private; and he is and will be with all his servants and disciples away, even to the end of the world; and until he have gathered them all into his heavenly kingdom, to behold and share his glory and felicity. Even so, Lord Jesus, be thou with us, and all thy people; and cause thy face to shine upon us, that thy way may be known on earth, thy saving health among all nations. Amen.

THE GOSPEL

ACCORDING TO

ST. MARK.



St. Peter speaks of Marcus, and calls him "his son;" perhaps implying that Marcus was converted by his ministry, and served with him in the Gospel. (1 Pet. v. 13.) This Marcus, or Mark, was undoubtedly the writer of the Gospel, on which we now enter: but whether he was, or was not, a different person from John surnamed Mark, of whom we read in the Acts of the Apostles, and in St. Paul's epistles, (Acts xii. 12. xiii. 5. 13. xv. 37—39. Col. iv. 10. 2 Tim. iv. 11;) must remain doubtful, as the most able and laborious inquirers are divided in opinion on the subject; the celebrated Grotius taking the lead on the one side, and the indefatigable Lardner on the other.—It is, however, generally agreed, that this Gospel was written under the immediate inspection of the apostle Peter, and received by the Church on his authority.—St. John had seen 'the three Gospels, and wrote his own as a supplement to them, as plainly appears in the harmony of the Gospels.'—Ecclesiastical history informs us, that Mark's Gospel had the approbation of Peter, and that Mark was instructed by him.—Papias conversed with the disciples of the apostles, about the beginning of the second century.—He speaks of the Gospels of Matthew and Mark as extant, and written by them.—Justin Martyr, A. D. 150, mentions the Gospels as universally received. He must have conversed with Christians who were old men, and learned that the Gospels were extant when they were young.—Between A. D. 70 and Justin, are the authors called apostolical, Clemens, Hermas, Barnabas, Ignatius, these make 'use of some of the Gospels and epistles.' (Jortin.) Justin Martyr cites passages from every one of the Gospels, declaring that they contained the words of Christ.—Irenaeus, in the same century, not only cites them all by name, but declares, that there were neither more nor less, received by the Church. Moreover, he cites passages from every chapter of St. Matthew and St. Luke, from fourteen chapters of St. Mark, and from twenty chapters of St. John.—Tatianus, who flourished in the same century, wrote a harmony of the Gospels: 'the Gospel gathered out of the four Gospels.' (Whitby.) It is therefore undeniable, that from the earliest ages of the Church, this Gospel and that of St. Luke, though not written by apostles, were received as authentic, and as divinely inspired: and this consideration gives much weight to the tradition that St. Peter sanctioned it by his apostolical authority, which induced the primitive Church, without hesitation to number it among the canonical books of Scripture. Some have considered St. Mark as epitomizing or abridging St. Matthew: and he doubtless records many of the same facts, and a few of the same discourses and parables, which are found in St. Matthew's Gospel: but he omits many things, and adds others; and he records some miracles much more fully than Matthew had done, and not without considerable variation: so that there is no reason to suppose, that he intentionally took any thing from Matthew, but that he wrote such things as were especially brought to his knowledge, and impressed on his mind. And the coincidence seems to have arisen, rather from the circumstance of the two evangelists writing the history of the same grand and interesting events, than from any design in the one of deducing his materials from the other. The circumstance of the same facts in many instances being repeated in this Gospel, and but few of our Lord's discourses introduced, will of course render the expositor's labour less needful, except in noting variations. But as it has pleased God to confirm his truth by several witnesses: it will never be unuseful to a humble pious inquirer to review the same important transactions, as placed by the evangelists in that point of view, which most affected his own mind: while the inimitable simplicity common to them all, however they vary the narrative, is an internal proof that they were not left to be carried away by their feelings, to use any expression unsuitable to the intrinsic dignity of the subject.

CHAP. I.

The Gospel begins with John's ministry. 1—6. Christ's baptism and temptation. 9—13. John being imprisoned. Jesus preaches in Galilee, and calls Simon and Andrew, James and John. 14—20. He casts out an unclean spirit. 21—23; heals Peter's wife's mother and many sick persons. 29—31; retires early for prayer, preaches in the synagogues of Galilee, and cleanses a leper, 35—45.

THE ^a beginning of the Gospel of ^b Jesus Christ, ^c the Son of God;

2 As it is ^d written in the prophets. ^e Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

3 The ^f voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

4 John ^g did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance, ^h for the ⁱ remission of sins.

5 And ^j there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem; and were all ^k baptized of him in the river of Jordan, ^l confessing their sins.

6 And John was ^m clothed with camels' hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his

loins; and he did ⁿ eat locusts and wild honey;

7 And preached, saying, ^o There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

8 I indeed ^p have baptized you with water; but ^q he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

9 ^r And it came to pass in those days, ^s that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

10 And straightway ^t coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens ^u opened, and the Spirit, ^v like a dove, descending upon him:

11 And ^w there came a voice from heaven, saying, ^x Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

12 And immediately ^y the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.

13 And he was there in the wilderness ^z forty days, ^a tempted of Satan, and was with the wild beasts: ^b and the angels ministered unto him.

14 ^c Now ^d after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, ^e preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.

15 And saying, ^f The time is fulfilled, and ^g the kingdom of God is at hand: ^h repent ye, and believe the gospel.

ⁱ Eph. i. 10.—^j Matt. iii. 2, 11, 17. ^k 7. Luke x. 9. ^l 1^a.—^m g. Matt. xxi. 31, 32. Luke

xv. 22.
o. Luke vi. 14.
p. Luke vi. 14.
q. Luke vi. 14.
r. Matt. iii. 11.
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h Matt iv. 18, 8c.
Luke v. 4.
i 19. 16. Matt.
x 2 Luke vi.
14 John i. 40—
42 v. 8. xii. 22
Acts i. 13.

16 Now ^a as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw ¹ Simon, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become ^k fishers of men.

18 And straightway they ¹ forsook their nets, and followed him.

19 And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw ^m James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets.

20 And straightway he called them: and ^a they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

21 ¶ And ^o they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath-day ^o he entered into the synagogue, and taught.

22 And ^a they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not ^r as the scribes.

23 ¶ And there was in their synagogue ^a a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

24 Saying, 'Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, ^a the Holy One of God.

25 And Jesus ^x rebuked him, saying,

Hold thy peace, and come out of him. 26 And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

27 And ^z they were all amazed, inasmuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? ^a for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

28 And immediately ^b his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

29 ¶ And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they ^e entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

30 But Simon's ^d wife's mother lay sick of a fever; and anon ^e they tell him of her.

31 And he came ^f and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ^z ministered unto them.

32 ¶ And ^b at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.

33 And ^a all the city was gathered together at the door.

34 And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; ^k and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.

V. 15. 'The time fixed by the prophets, especially by Daniel's seventy weeks, is now accomplished; and the predicted events, which have so long excited the most anxious and sanguine expectation, are on the very eve of being fulfilled.'

V. 16—20. (Note, Matt. iv. 13—22.)

V. 22. (Note, Matt. vii. 28, 29.)

V. 23—23. This miracle is not recorded by St. Matthew. As the possessed person was admitted into the synagogue, it may be supposed that the unclean spirit did not harass him at all times; but perhaps took advantage of the paroxysms of bodily disorder, or other circumstances, to renew his more violent assaults. Accordingly the man was seized with one in the synagogue, and cried out with great vehemency, "Let us alone," (Notes, v. 1—20;) being probably urged by satanic influence to fear immediate destruction to himself, instead of expecting the destruction of the power of the unclean spirits, and his own deliverance, from the presence of Christ. No disorder could possibly enable a man to know Jesus to be "the Holy One of God," who came "to destroy the works"
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"of the devil;" this was doubtless the language of the unclean spirit, speaking by the organs of the man; and probably intending to bring Jesus into the suspicion of a confederacy with Satan by this insidious testimony. Our Lord therefore imposed silence on him, and constrained him to quit possession: and though he showed his malice, by tearing or convulsing the possessed person, and causing him to call out aloud as in extreme anguish, yet he so entirely left him, that the people were exceedingly astonished at the miracle, and it greatly increased and extended the reputation of Christ.

What have we? &c. (24.) Or, "What hast thou to do with us?"

What new? &c. Such astonishing miracles are not wrought in vain: some new discovery of the will of God is intended; but what can it be?

V. 29—31. (Notes, &c. Matt. viii. 14—18.) (Marg. Ref.)

V. 32. The sabbath ended at sunset; and then the people seized the opportunity of bringing the diseased to Jesus, that they might be healed.

CHAP. II.

Jesus heals a paralytic, and justifies himself in forgiving his sins, 1—12. He calls Matthew, and answers those that blamed

him for eating with publicans and sinners, 13—17. He vindicates his disciples, when blamed for not frequent fasting, and accused of breaking the sabbath, 18—28.

servants known, and renders their eminence equal to their excellence. The hearts of sinners must be prepared, before they can welcome the privileges and perform the duties of the kingdom of God: and this is commonly effected by preaching repentance and conversion. Ministers should diligently perform their duty in this respect, and in administering divine ordinances; and thus numbers may be led to confess their sins, and to profess repentance: but without faith in the Saviour, through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, they cannot be accepted servants or worshippers of God. This all faithful preachers plainly declare: and they speak and think humbly of themselves and honourably of Christ, in exact proportion to the degree of their spiritual discernment and advance in the divine life: and when to this they join a holy indifference to all worldly things, they are likely to be extensively useful. Whilst we rejoice in the perfection of our Surety's obedience, we should copy his example: and by attending on all God's ordinances, we shall be in the way of receiving more abundant supplies of "the Spirit of adoption, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God," accepted through his "beloved Son, in whom the Father is well pleased." Then, should we be exposed to persecutors fierce as wild beasts, as well as to Satan's temptations, during our continuance in this wilderness, we may confide in the divine protection and consolation, and expect that angels will delight in ministering to us also, for our Redeemer's sake.

V. 14—28.

One instrument after another finishes his transient season of usefulness; but the divine Agent "worketh hitherto," and will to the end, and for ever; and though apparent delays intervene, yet, "when the time is fulfilled," he will perfect what concerneth the Church and the believer, according to his holy word. They, who are labouring in honesty and harmony, are more in the way of Christ's call to further usefulness, than such as are wrangling or loitering, under pretence of study and preparation. The occupation of a minister, though despised by carnal men, might be deemed a high preferment, not only by those who should be called to it from the fishing boat, or the flock, but even by such as should leave the highest employments in the community for the sake of it; as the salvation of one soul is a far more important event, than the temporal prosperity even of whole nations. But they, "who desire this good work," must be content to forsake all worldly interests and expectations, that they may follow the example, the instructions, and the commandments of Christ; and give up themselves wholly to learn his truth and will, in order that they may teach them to others also. May his powerful word call forth many such self-denied, disinterested, laborious, patient, and skillful fishers of men: for though many have been, and are

employed, and vast numbers of sinners have been, and many still are, brought forth from the course of this evil world into his Church, yet far more continue in their natural estate, destroying each other, and falling a prey to that great leviathan, who takes pastime in this work of destruction. Many scribes indeed there have been, and are, possessed of human learning, and making worldly preferment their leading object; but our prayer ought to be, that "Scribes, well instructed unto the kingdom of God," may teach with authority in all congregations, after the manner of Christ, and to the conviction and astonishment of such hearers, as have hitherto been taught in a mere formal manner: and this would render our churches more frequented than they now generally are. But there are too many, even in assemblies for sacred worship, who are slaves to unclean spirits: such may quietly attend, whilst only formal teachers officiate; but if the Lord come with his faithful ministers, and his holy doctrine, and by his convincing Spirit, they begin to cry out, and are ready to say, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us?" Satan indeed well knows him to be "the Holy One of God;" but he very successfully labours in our day to hide this truth from his servants, that he may maintain and extend his empire, through their ignorance and prejudice. The immediate and perfect cure of frantic lunatics, by a word speaking, would even in our days excite astonishment, and cause men to exclaim, "What thing is this?" Yet a work really greater is frequently wrought, and men treat it with supercilious contempt and neglect! If this were not so, the evident conversion of a notorious profligate to a sober, righteous, and godly life, by the preaching of a crucified Saviour, would cause all around to inquire, "What new doctrine is this," (*new* to them, though *old* in itself); by which unclean spirits are constrained to depart, and rebels are brought to the willing obedience of children? Indeed, it is in this way that the fame of Jesus and the honour of the Gospel do spread abroad in this evil world: and if every one of those, who profess the doctrines of grace, was but evidently thus dispossessed and changed, they would gradually prevail against all opposition.

V. 29—45.

We should apply to Christ for help in all our spiritual and temporal maladies, for ourselves and those belonging to us; and we ought to use our health and strength in ministering to him and his disciples, diligently recommending him to others, as knowing that nothing is too large for his grace, or impossible to omnipotence.—But when did we spend a single day, as Jesus spent every one of his days? Were we like him, we should rise a great while before it be light, (if health permitted,) that we might have time for communion with our heavenly Father, when hindered at other hours by urgent engage-

1. 45 Matt ix.

b vi 21 Luke

xvii 35-39

John iv 47 Act

e 8

c 13 i 27 35

iv 1 2 Luke

v 10 i 1

d 14 vi 21 Mar

v 2 Luke viii

v 10 Acts viii

v 10 Acts 25

xvi 8 Rom 4

e 2 Tim iv 2

e Matt ix 2

v 10

f Deut. xxii. 8

Luke v. 19.

g Gen. xxi. 12

John ii 25 Act

xi 23 i Thee. i

2. 4 Jam. i. 18

b 9. 10 Is. lxi. 11

Matt ix 2 Luke

v 20 vi 47-50

Acts v 31 2 Cor

ii 10 Col. ii.

13

i 31 Matt ix

12 Luke vi 48

k Job xxxiii. 17

— 26 Ps xxxiii

— 28 Eccl. 7-9

ciii. 3 16

xxxviii. 17 John

i 14 1 Cor. xi.

10 Jam. v. 15

l vii 17 Matt.

xvi 7, 8 Luke

v 21, 22 2 Cor.

x. 5 Marg.

m xiv 64 Matt

ix. 3. xxvi. 65.

John x. 35, 36.

AND "again he entered into Capernaum after some days; " and it was noised that he was in the house.

2 And "straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them; " no, not so much as about the door: " and he preached the word unto them.

3 ¶ And they come unto him, " bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, " they uncovered the roof where he was: and, when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

5 When Jesus " saw their faith, " he said unto the sick of the palsy, " Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

6 But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, " and reasoning in their hearts,

7 Why doth this man thus " speak

blasphemies? " who can forgive sins but God only?

8 And immediately, " when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, " Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

9 Whether " is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, " Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

10 But that ye may know, " that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

11 I say unto thee, " Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; " insomuch that they were all amazed, and " glorified God, saying, " We never saw it on this fashion.

ments: and having had a good sabbath, we should be the more earnest in prayer the next morning, lest the impression should wear off, and that we might obtain a blessing on those especially, who have heard the word of God from or with us. Men may outwardly attend on instruction with diligence, and yet not be prepared to follow Christ fully, but it behooves us to use our opportunities whilst they are afforded us, that we may be established in the faith, in case we should be proved by losing them for a season.—As Christ came to preach the Gospel in different places, we should endeavour to spread it on every side, as we have opportunity: and let all who are weary of the leprosy of sin, and afraid of its consequences, wait on Christ to be cleansed; for when he speaks the word, (and he will speak it, if we truly believe in him,) the most inveterate evil propensities will be brought under, and sin shall no more have dominion over us. If this blessing be vouchsafed us, let us approve it in our conduct to the ministers and people of God, by walking in all his ordinances and commandments, as witnesses for Christ in this evil world. Nor ought we to conceal our obligations to the Saviour: for no reasons now exist, why we should hesitate to spread abroad his praises; and the more sinners flock to him from every quarter, the greater is his honour and the more complete his triumph and joy.

NOTES.

CHAP. II. V. 1, 2. As Jesus had been during several days absent from Capernaum, it is probable some of the inhabitants began to conclude that he would not return; and they who were sick, or had sick friends or relations, might fear that they had missed the opportunity of obtaining cures. So that the rumour of his return excited great attention, and such numbers assembled to hear

his discourses, or witness his miracles, that the house and the court before the door could not contain them all. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 3—12. (*Note, Matt. ix. 2—8.*) We find, from Luke, that certain Pharisees and Scribes had come from all the cities and towns, far and wide, and even from Jerusalem; doubtless to watch our Lord, and to seek for matter of accusation against him. (*Marg. Ref.*) And whilst he was instructing the people, four persons came, bringing on a bed a man so enfeebled by the palsy, that he could not be otherwise conveyed. Probably he despaired of a cure from any other quarter, but expecting it from Jesus, he was desirous of being carried to him, and his friends were equally willing to assist him; though it would be laborious to them, and painful to him. And when they could not come into the presence of Christ, because of the multitude, being unwilling to postpone the case, lest his departure should again deprive them of the opportunity, they conveyed the bed to the top of the house. Probably this was low, and perhaps only one story high, and there was some way up on the outside: but though there might be also an opening in the roof, yet it seems not to have been wide enough to let the bed through. They therefore uncovered the roof, and even broke up what was in the way. Thus they let him down through the tiling in his couch, and brought him into the presence of Jesus. Some think, judging from the sight of the houses, and acquaintance with the customs in those eastern countries, that he was let down through the battlements, on the outside of the house, into the court-yard: but the language of the evangelists seems incapable of this meaning; and any injury done to the roof, by breaking it up, might be repaired at a small expense. When, however, Jesus saw their faith. (in these evident effects of it, as well as

a Matt. xiii. 1.

a ii 7, 8, 20, 21
iv 1 Prov. 1, 20
22 Luke xii
23 xiii 38
b ii 18 Matt. ix.
9 Luke v 27
c ii 18 Luke vi
15 Acts i 13
* Or place where
the custom was
observed.
d i 17 20. Matt.
ix 19—22.

e Matt x, 10, 11.
xxi 31 22 Luke
v 29, 30. xv. 1

13 ¶ And he went forth again * by the sea-side; * and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.

14 And as he passed by, ^b he saw ^c Levi the son of ^c Alpheus sitting at the * receipt of custom, and said unto him, * Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

15 And it came to pass, that, * as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.

16 And when the Scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, * How is it that he eateth and drinketh with * publicans and sinners ?

f 7. Is lxxv. 5.
Luke xv 2, 30
g ii 11 xix 7
10 i Cor. ii 15
Heb xii 3
g Matt xiii. 17.

17 When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, ^h They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: ⁱ I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.

b Matt ix. 12, 13.
Luke v. 31, 32
xv. 7, 29 xvi
15. John ix. 34.
40
i Matt xiii. 11
Luke xv 10
xix. 10 Acts
xx 21 xxvi 20
Roma v 6—8, 20
21, i Tim i 16,
16. Tit i 16,
31. 3—7

b Matt ix. 14—17
Luke v. 33—39
1 Matt. vi. 16
18, xxiii. 6, Luke
xxviii. 12 Rom.
2

c Gea xxix 22.
Judg. xiv. 10, 11.
Ps. xiv 14 Cant.
v. 3 Matt. xxv.
1—10.

18 ¶ And ^k the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, ^l Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not ?

19 And Jesus said unto them, ^m Can the children of the bride-chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them ? as long as

they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast.

20 But the days will come, when ⁿ the Bridegroom shall ^o be taken away from them, ^p and then shall they fast in those days.

21 No man also ^q seweth a piece of ^r new cloth on an old garment; else the new piece that filled it up, taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse.

22 And no man putteth new wine into old ^s bottles; else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.

23 ¶ And it came to pass, ^t that he went through the corn-fields on the sabbath-day; and his disciples began, as they went, ^u to pluck the ears of corn.

24 And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, ^v why do they on the sabbath-day ^w that which is not lawful ?

25 And he said unto them, ^x Have ye never read ^y what David did, when he had need, and was an hungered, he, and they that were with him ?

26 How he went into the house of God, in the days of ^z Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shew-bread, ^a which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him ?

by their intimate knowledge of their hearts,) he did not at first remove the man's disorder; but addressing him, in the most condescending and affectionate manner, authoritatively pronounced his sins forgiven. This afforded the Scribes the occasion for which they were waiting; and though they did not openly declare their sentiments, they inwardly thought him guilty of blasphemy, in presuming to do that which was the prerogative of God only. But our Lord soon showed them that he possessed divine perfection and authority; for "he perceived in his spirit," or by his own inward knowledge of their hearts, the *thoughts* or *reasonings*, which inwardly employed them: and he inquired, "Whether it were easier to say to the sick of 'the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, take up thy bed and walk?'" Divine authority was requisite actually to forgive sins; and omnipotence was needful for the immediate and complete removal of that terrible disorder. Having therefore put the matter upon that issue, he proved his authority, as the Son of man, even on earth in his state of humiliation, to forgive sins, by commanding the paralytic to arise, and take up his bed and carry it to his house: and such power accompanied his word, that the man was enabled to do this in the sight of the multitude; so that they were all astonished, gave praise to God on his behalf, and acknowledged that they had

never seen it on this fashion before. Thus the man, in his miraculous cure, possessed the fullest evidence that his sins were pardoned; every one, who saw him carry his bed, had a demonstration of the divine power and authority of Christ; others were encouraged to apply to him for health and salvation; God was glorified; and the malignant Scribes were put to shame and silence. * Christ, by healing the paralytic, demonstrates, that man must by faith in him alone recover all the strength which he has lost." (*Beza.*)

V. 13—22. (*Notes, &c. Matt. ix. 9—17. Luke v. 31—39.*) Matthew is here called "Levi the son of Alpheus;" but it is doubtful, whether he was brother to James the son of Alpheus, or son to another person of the same name. (*Marg. Ref.*) "Superstitious and hypocritical persons rashly place the sum of piety in things of an indifferent nature. They do not consider, what the strength of each person can bear, and they rashly enact any kind of laws about these things without discretion: and they place the rules given in the word of God respecting them, among his laws against things in themselves unlawful, without making any distinction. And they prefer the ceremonial law to the moral; when, on the contrary, they ought to seek from the latter the true use of ceremonies." (*Beza.*)

V. 23—26. (*Notes, Matt. xii. 1—8.*) Abiathar the

c. P. c. xxi. 12.
Deut. v. 11.
Num. xxi. 4.
Ex. x. 22-26.
Luke. i. 9. John
xi. 23. 1 Cor.
iii. 24. 2 Cor. vi. 15.

27 And he said unto them, 'The sab-
bath was made for man, and not man for
the sabbath:

28 Therefore ^d the Son of man is Lord ^d also of the sabbath.

d. iii. 1 Matt. xii.
8. Luke vi. 5.
John vi. 9-11.
Rev. i. 10.
17. ix. 5-11 16 Rev. i. 10.

high-priest. Or "the chief priest;" for the same word is used both for the high priest and any of the chief priests. Ahimelech was *high-priest* when David took the show-bread; but Abiathar his son was *chief-priest* under him, and probably superintended the tabernacle and its stated concerns. Ahimelech was soon after slain, and Abiathar became high priest, and continued in that office for above forty years, till after the death of David. He was much more eminent in the history, than his father had been: and these considerations sufficiently show the propriety of inserting his name, rather than Ahimelech's, on this occasion.

V. 27, 28. The sabbath was instituted for the good of mankind, considered as rational agents, living in society, having many wants and troubles; the creatures and subjects of God, preparing for an eternal state of happiness or misery, and sinners under a dispensation of mercy: but man was not made for the sabbath, as if his observance of it could be of any service to God, or as if he were required to adhere strictly to the letter of it, to his real detriment. Every regulation therefore respecting it should be interpreted according to this general rule; so that, when a strict observance of the external rest, according to the prescription especially of the judicial or ceremonial law, would be injurious to the individual, or to others, in an enlarged and complex view of the subject, the Lord of the sabbath hath granted him a licence to dispense with it, but not on any other account.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-12.



Violent sickness and the fear of death, when united to some hope of recovery and an apprehension that the opportunity may speedily elapse, will render men willing to use various irksome and painful methods of cure; and the failure of one commonly renders them more eager to make trial of another. This indeed is not to be blamed: on the contrary, we should put ourselves to inconveniences and hardship, in attempting the relief of the afflicted and diseased: but it is most to be desired, that their affliction may bring them to Christ, for the salvation of their souls, as well as for a blessing on the means used to recover bodily health; for in that case their afflictions will certainly be either removed or sanctified. Forgiveness of sins, being the forerunner of all other real blessings, is far more valuable than the removal of any sickness; and the loss of the soul is infinitely more dreadful than the death of the body: but how very few act, as if they believed these undeniable truths! We cannot deliver our fellow sinners from their ruinous diseases; but we may, in various ways, be helpful in bringing them to Christ for salvation; and should miss no opportunity, and shrink from no self-denial, in attempting it. The humbled sinner, who despairs of all help except from the Saviour, will evince his faith by seeking to him with all earnestness and without delay; and difficulties

will only serve to increase his diligence and resolution. He will not attempt to heal himself, or expect to become better, before he comes to his Physician; but when he receives the blessing of forgiveness, it is accompanied by such a powerful operation of renewing grace on his soul, that he evidently is "a new creature; old things pass away, behold, all things become new!" When enabled to overcome those evils to which he was before enslaved, and to delight in those duties of which he had been incapable, he has a witness in himself, that he is pardoned and justified in Christ Jesus: for he, who heals the distempered soul, must also have power to cleanse the guilty conscience; and the former is the seal and attestation of the latter. Whatever proud Pharisees and scribes may say in their hearts, or with their lips, against such instances of our Redeemer's power and grace, the happy change is often so evident, that it cannot be gainsayed; and all impartial judges must see and own, in the conduct of many who profess the Gospel, a demonstration of the excellency of the doctrines, and of the efficacy of the grace, which they have received. But if any think their sins forgiven, who still remain under the power of their lusts, they deceive themselves and bring a scandal on the Gospel; for Christ is only glorified in those, who glorify him by their conduct, from the time when they profess to believe in his name. Should any pretend to forgive sins, who have no power to cure paralytics, and to bid them take up their bed and walk, they would be justly chargeable with the most presumptuous blasphemy: but the feeblest believer may attempt such things, at Christ's command, as otherwise would be impossible to him; for his word is with power, and he will strengthen the willing soul to yield obedience to it.

V. 13-28.



Whilst the faithful servants of Christ, after his example, call on publicans and sinners to forsake all and follow him, and meet with some success in their labour of love, there are those, that will accuse them of encouraging vice, and of being enemies to morality and goodness, not understanding that "Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." He did not escape such slanders; and we should therefore be willing to bear them, as well as careful not to deserve them. If we be blamed for omitting such things as are not needful or seasonable, or for doing that which is not sinful, we may quietly leave him to plead our cause. But we should attend to every part of our duty in its proper order and season; and ministers should be cautious in dealing with the weak, but conscientious, that they may not discourage them. They should insist on the habitual practice of all holiness, the observance of the Lord's day, and attendance on divine ordinances, in subserviency to their real good and that of others; but not be so exact in minute or doubtful externals, as to interfere with the grand concerns of genuine piety, justice, and charity; or with any thing, which may glorify God or do good to men.

CHAP. III.

Jesus heals a man's withered hand on the sabbath. 1—5. The Pharisees conspire his death; he retires, is followed by multitudes, and heals many, 6—12. He chooseth twelve apostles, 13—19. His friends look upon him as beside himself, 20, 21. He confutes the blasphemous absurdity of the scribes, who ascribe his casting out devils to the power of Beelzebub, 22—30. They who do the will of God are his nearest relations, 31—35.

a. 1. 21. Mat. xii.
b. 1. 14. Luke vi.
c. 1. 1. 1. 1.
d. 1. 1. 1. 1.
e. 1. 1. 1. 1.
f. 1. 1. 1. 1.
g. 1. 1. 1. 1.
h. 1. 1. 1. 1.
i. 1. 1. 1. 1.
j. 1. 1. 1. 1.
k. 1. 1. 1. 1.
l. 1. 1. 1. 1.
m. 1. 1. 1. 1.
n. 1. 1. 1. 1.
o. 1. 1. 1. 1.
p. 1. 1. 1. 1.
q. 1. 1. 1. 1.
r. 1. 1. 1. 1.
s. 1. 1. 1. 1.
t. 1. 1. 1. 1.
u. 1. 1. 1. 1.
v. 1. 1. 1. 1.
w. 1. 1. 1. 1.
x. 1. 1. 1. 1.
y. 1. 1. 1. 1.
z. 1. 1. 1. 1.

AND ^a he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had ^b a withered hand.

2 And ^c they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath-day; that they might accuse him.

3 And ^d he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.

4 And he saith unto them, ^e Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath-days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

5 And when he had looked round about on them ^f with anger, being ^g grieved for the ^h hardness of their hearts, he saith

unto the man, ⁱ Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched ^j it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

6 And ^k the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the ^l Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

7 But ^m Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: ⁿ and a great multitude from ^o Galilee followed him, and from Judea,

8 And from Jerusalem, and from ^p Idumea, and from ^q beyond Jordan; and they about ^r Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

9 And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him, ^s because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.

10 For he had healed many; insomuch that they ^t pressed upon him for to touch him, ^u as many as had plagues.

11 And ^v unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art ^w the Son of God.

12 And he ^x straitly charged them that they should not make him known.

NOTES.

CHAP. III. V. 1—5. (*Note, Matt. xii. 9—13.*) When Christ demanded, "Whether it was lawful to do good, or evil, on the sabbath-days? To save life, or to kill?" He referred to the secret intentions of the Scribes and Pharisees to compass his death. Though they were framing such projects in the synagogue, and on the sabbath-day, yet they blamed him for doing good, and saving men's lives on that day; even when done in subterfuge to the salvation of their souls also! Their malice and perverseness therefore excited his holy indignation: but their exposedness to misery, through the hardness and blindness of their hearts, caused him also to grieve over them, as well as for the mischief they did to the people.

Is it lawful, &c.? Hence it seems to follow, that he who doth not do good to his neighbour, when he can, doeth evil to him; it being a want of charity, and therefore evil, to neglect any opportunity of doing good: and that not to preserve life, when it is in danger, is to transgress the precept, which saith, "Thou shalt not kill." (*Whitby.*)

Stand forth. Or, Arise into the midst. *Gr.*

—Anger. Hence we learn, that anger is not always sinful; this passion being found in him in whom was no sin. But then it must be noted, that anger is not properly defined by philosophers, as a desire of revenge.

Our Saviour was angry with the Pharisees, yet he had no desire to revenge this sin upon them; but had a great compassion for them. (*Whitby.*) Our Lord's anger was not only not sinful, but it was a holy indignation, a perfectly right state of heart; and the want of it would have been a sinful defect. It would show a want of filial respect and affection, for a son to hear without emotion his father's character unjustly aspersed. Would it then not be a want of due reverence for God, to hear his name blasphemed, without feeling and expressing an indignant disapprobation? Vengeance belongs to the ruler exclusively: and he may grieve at the necessity imposed on him of thus expressing his disapprobation of crimes; but it is his duty. Eli ought to have shown anger, as well as grief, when informed of the vile conduct of his sons; and to have expressed it by severe coercive measures. Thus parents and masters, as well as magistrates, may sin, in not feeling and expressing just displeasure against those under their care. And anger is only sinful, when it springs from selfishness and malevolence; when causeless, or above the cause; and when expressed by unhallowed words and actions.

V. 6—12. (*Notes, Matt. xii. 14—21 xxii. 15—22.*) The time-serving Herodians did not care for religion, except in subterfuge to politics; yet they concurred with the superstitious Pharisees in plotting the death of the holy Jesus! The word translated *plagues* signifies

13 ¶ And ^a he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth *unto him* whom he would : and they came unto him.

14 And ^b he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, ^c and that he might send them forth to preach,

15 And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.

16 And ^d Simon he surnamed Peter ;

17 And ^e James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James ; (^f and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder ;)

18 And ^g Andrew, and ^h Philip, and Bartholomew, and ⁱ Matthew, and Thomas, ^m and James the son of ⁿ Alphaeus, and ^o Thaddeus, and ^p Simon the Canaanite,

19 And ^q Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him : and they went ^{*} into a house.

20 ¶ And the multitude cometh together again, ^r so that they could not so much as eat bread.

^a Matt. x. 1, &c. Luke vi. 12-16. b John. xvi. 16. Acts i. 21, 26. Gal. i. 15-20. c Lu. c. ix. 1-5. x. 1-11. xxiv. 47. Acts i. 8. d Lu. ix. 10. Matt. xvi. 17-18. John i. 42. i Cor. i. 1. ii. 13. 5 Gal. ii. 7-9. Ephes. 2. Pet. i. 1. e Lu. vi. 12-16. f John. xvi. 16. Acts i. 21, 26. Gal. i. 15-20. g Lu. ix. 1-5. h Lu. ix. 1-5. i Lu. ix. 1-5. m Lu. ix. 1-5. n Lu. ix. 1-5. o Lu. ix. 1-5. p Lu. ix. 1-5. q Lu. ix. 1-5. r Lu. ix. 1-5.

21 And when his [†] friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him : for they said, ^a He is beside himself.

22 And the scribes [†] which came down from Jerusalem said, ^u He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

23 And he called them *unto him*, and said unto them ^{*} in parables, ^v How can Satan cast out Satan ?

24 And if ^{*} a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

25 And if ^{*} a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

26 And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.

27 No man ^b can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man ; and then he will spoil his house.

28 Verily I say unto you, ^c All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme :

Heb. vi. 4-8. x. 26-31. i John v. 14

scourges, and implies that all afflictions are the effects of God's displeasure against the sins of men, and should be received and improved as salutary corrections. When it is said, that "unclean spirits fell down before him," it relates to the persons possessed with them ; and it forms an undeniable proof of the reality of the possessions of the power of the evil spirits over these afflicted persons, and of the absolute authority of Christ over them.

V. 13-19. (Notes, &c. Matt. x. 1-4.) This appointment of the twelve apostles seems to have occurred some time before they were sent forth to preach. (Marg. Ref.) They were chosen "to be with him," that his daily instructions, conversation, and devotions, might prepare them for their most important work. The surname of *Boanerges*, or *sons of thunder*, given to James and John, doubtless related to the energy and efficacy with which they addressed men's consciences, to awaken their fears, and to show them their need of mercy and salvation. Christ seems to have given them this name, from a foresight of the heat and zeal of their temper, of which they quickly gave an instance, in their desire to call down fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans. Hence we find in the Acts, Peter and John are the chief speakers and actors in the defence and propagation of the Gospel : and the zeal of James and Peter seems to be the reason why the one was slain by Herod, and the other imprisoned, in order to the like execution. (Whitby.) It is evident, that John, as well as James, was naturally of a warm and sanguine disposition : but when this was greatly sanctified, it constituted that fervent, zealous, and affectionate temper, which appears in his writings. Yet they, who speak of his *loving* spirit, (I suppose because he

so much inculcates *love*,) as if he had been more lenient indulgent, and incapable of giving pain, by sharp reproofs and awful warnings, than the other apostles, seem to have totally mistaken his character : for no part of the Scripture is more suited to give offence to all unsound professors of Christianity, than his first epistle ; or even to put inconsistent or negligent Christians to a stand, and make them question their own sincerity.

V. 20, 21. After Christ had appointed the apostles, they went into a house, and the multitude assembled so speedily, that they had no time to take any refreshment ; yet our Lord proceeded to instruct them. His friends therefore deemed him to be too far transported by zeal ; and such of them, as did not believe him to be the Son of God, concluded that he was *beside himself*, and that he exceeded all bounds of moderation and prudence : they therefore sought to lay hold on him, and either by importunity or compulsion to prevail with him to desist from his excessive labours. Many objections indeed have been made to this translation and interpretation ; yet I cannot but think that this is the real meaning of the passage. Some of Christ's relations or acquaintances might think him beside himself, for the same reason that Felix and others did St. Paul ; and in their carnal regard to him, might purpose to use compulsion, if persuasions would not prevail with him to desist : and even his more pious relatives might possibly be anxious for his health, and deem his labours indiscreet, and so concur in the design ; for it is thought by many, on very probable grounds, that he had watched all the preceding night, and been laboriously employed all the former part of the day. (Marg. Ref.)

29 But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:

30 Because^a they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

31 There came^c then his brethren and his mother, and standing without, sent unto him, calling him.

32 And the multitude sat about him; and they said unto him, Behold, thy

mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

33 And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother,^b or my brethren?

34 And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

35 For whosoever shall^k do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

g. Doct. xxix. 4.
1 Luke 11. 4.
John 11.
2 Cor. V. 18. 4.
b. 21. xi. 3. John
vii. 3-5.
1 Cor. xxi. 22.
c. Cant. ix. 20. 10.
v. 1, 2. Matt.
xix. 49, 50. xxv.
40. 15. xxviii.
10. Luke. xi. 27.
29. John. xxi. 17.
Rom. i. 11, 12.
1. 2. 10. 11. 21.
John. vi. 17.
1. John. 3. 17.
10. 22. 23.

V. 22—30. (Notes, &c. Matt. xii. 22—32.) The instance of a kingdom, or family, divided against itself, constituted a kind of *parable*, illustrating the subject under consideration. The expression, “in danger of eternal damnation,” signifies “exposed to eternal damnation.”

V. 31—35. (Notes, Matt. xii. 46—50.)

His mother. Hence Theophylact taxes her with vain-glory, in endeavouring to draw him from teaching the word. Tertullian pronounceth her guilty of incredulity: Chrysostom, of vain-glory, infirmity, and madness, for ‘this very thing.’ (Whitby.) It is plain, that many of these intimations were suited, and doubtless prophetically intended, to be a scriptural protest against the *idolatrous* honour to this day, by vast multitudes rendered to the virgin Mary. She was no doubt an excellent and honourable character, but evidently not perfect: she is entitled to great estimation and high veneration; but surely not to religious confidence and worship.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—19.

Acts of mercy and charity can never be unseasonable; for it is as lawful to do good to man, as it is proper to attend on the worship of God, on the Lord’s day. But selfish and malicious men, who are projecting wickedness in the midst of ostentatious devotion, are most prone to censure those good works which they will not imitate; and they are especially glad to find something to condemn in those who are labouring to promote the salvation of souls, and to show the vanity of their formal and inefficacious appearances of religion. Whilst we go on steadily in our work, notwithstanding opposition, we may properly express an indignant abhorrence of wickedness; but it should be connected with compassion for the persons of opposers, and earnest desires of their salvation. We shall commonly find, that the rage and enmity of proud enemies will increase, in proportion as the power and grace of Christ are glorified; and that unbelievers of the most opposite sentiments and characters will combine against the cause of evangelical godliness: but if we should ever be compelled to retire from their persecuting rage, we ought to seek for other scenes and opportunities of usefulness. What multitudes thronged after Jesus, to hear his word, behold his miracles, and share the beneficent effects of them! Yet how few in comparison were willing to avow their relation to him, when the time of his sufferings arrived! He knew that it would be so, and could form a

proper estimate of their inconstancy: but we should be upon our guard; for such popular applause and favour are very dangerous, and are no more to be trusted than the deceitful calm of the unstable ocean. All our sicknesses and calamities spring from the anger of God against us for our sins; and the removal of them, or the sanctifying blessing on them for the good of our souls, was purchased for us by the sufferings of Christ. But the plagues and maladies of our hearts are chiefly to be deprecated: he can cure them also by a touch or a word; and unclean spirits, knowing him to be the Son of God, are still constrained to obey him. May increasing numbers press to him to be healed of these plagues, and delivered from these enemies: may he send forth more and more of such, as have “been with him,” and have learned of him to preach his Gospel, and to be his instruments in this blessed work; may all his ministers be Boanerges, sons of thunder, to speak his word with energy and efficacy; and may no Judas be found among those who presume to declare his truths!

V. 20—35.

If we were as earnest as our Master, and “instant in season, and out of season, in preaching the word,” in prayer, and in every good work, we should deem no hour improper, no situation inconvenient, for these labours of love: but we also should find, that our carnal or injudicious friends would be ready to deem us *beside ourselves*, and would use all their influence to moderate our ardour and lessen our diligence. Prudence indeed is necessary and commendable; but it is extremely apt to degenerate into lukewarmness: and zeal like that of Christ will seldom escape the charge of being excessive and indiscreet, from the more decent part of mankind, who can scarcely conceive, that invisible and future things require more earnestness than our most important temporal concerns. But proud and malignant enemies will not stop here; they will impute the most beneficial effects to the basest motives or causes; and pretend that men are doing Satan’s work, and opposing every thing good, when sinners are evidently brought to repentance and to newness of life. But let them beware how they ascribe the operations of the Holy Ghost to the power of the devil, or how they deride and revile them: for in so doing they may be guilty of such blasphemy, as shall never find forgiveness, but expose them to eternal damnation. Let the servants of Christ go on with their work, in dependence on his power, and avoiding all contentions with each other, which only weaken the common cause: then they will find their

CHAP. IV.

The parable of the sower, 1—9. *Why Christ taught by parables*, 10—13. *The interpretation*, 14—20. *Knowledge is given to be communicated*, 21, 22. *A call to hear with attention*, 23—25. *The parable of seed sown, imperceptibly growing up, and ripening for harvest*, 26—29: *that of the grain of mustard-seed*, 30—32. *Christ teaches only by parables, which he expounds to his disciples*, 33, 34. *He stills a tempest by his word*, 35—41.

AND ^a he began again to teach by the sea-side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, ^b so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.

2 And he taught them many things ^c by parables, and said unto them ^d in his doctrine,

3 ^e Hearken; Behold, ^f there went out a sower to sow:

4 And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way-side, ^g and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

5 And some fell on ^h stony ground, where it had not much earth, and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth:

6 But when ⁱ the sun was up, it was scorched, and because it had ^k no root, it withered away.

7 And some ^l fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

8 And other ^m fell on good ground, and did ⁿ vi-l fruit that sprang up, and increased: and ^o brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some ^p an hundred.

9 And he said unto them, ^q He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

10 ^r And ^s when he was alone, they that were about him, with the twelve, asked of him the parable.

11 And he said unto them, ^t Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto ^u them that are without, ^v all these things are done in parables:

12 That ^w seeing they may see, and not perceive, and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should ^x be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

13 And he said unto them, ^y Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?

14 The ^z Sower soweth ^{aa} the word.

15 And ^{ab} these are they by the way-side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, ^{ac} Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.

16 And these are they likewise ^{ad} which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;

17 And ^{ae} have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, ^{af} when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

18 And these are they ^{ag} which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,

19 And ^{ah} the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, ^{ai} and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh ^{aj} unfruitful.

20 And these are they ^{ak} which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive ^{al} it, and bring forth fruit, some thirty-fold, some sixty, and some ^{am} an hundred.

1 Luke x 41 xii 17-21 29, 30 xxi 34. Phil iv 6 — h Prov xxiii 5. k Rom 8 v. 10. 11 Tim vi 9, 10 17. — i Pet iv 3, 4 1 John 12 16. — l Matt 1 10. John xv 2. Heb vi 7, 8 2 Pet 1 6. — m Matt xii 2. Luke 19 12. John xv 4, 5 Rom vii 4 Gal v 22, 23. Phil 1 11 Col 1 10. 1 Thes 1 — n Gen, xxvi 12.

5 b 13 Matt xii.

6 c Luke v 1-3.

7 d 11 12 Ps

215 4 Matt

210 3, 10, 14,

35.

8 e 18 Matt

xii 22 John vi

16 17 xxi 19

9 f 9 vi 14. Deut

11 19 xxvii

11 xiv 4 Job

vi 21 vii 32

15 xvi 1, 2

11 1 2 A 15 1

14 He ii 1-

2 Jan ii 5

Rev ii 7, 1, 20

11 26-27 Ec

xi 6 's xxviii

23 26 Matt

xiii 3 20 26

23a vii 5-8

John iv 25 28

1 Cor ii 6-9

15 Gen xv

1 Matt xi 14, 19

16 Luke iii 12

17 16 Ez xi

19 xxvi 26

20 Hos x 12, Am

12 12 Matt xii

19 6 20 21

16 Luke vii 6, 13.

3 Cant i 6, 15

23a 4 Jon 16

19 1 2 Jan 11

Rev vi 16.

5-5 Jon xvi

13 k Ps 13 xxi 13

5-5 Jon xvi

15 e-eph vi 15

Coll ii 7 2

Thos ii 10

July 12

116 4 Gen iii

17 16 Jer iv 3

17 Matt v 3 7 22

15 John 1 12

13 b 9 2

vii 17 Acts

xxvii 1 Heb

iv 1 2 Jan 2

19 22 1 Pet 1

7-3

n Gen xvi 12

Phil i 11.

o 23 2: vi

11 6 Matt xi

11 3 8 xvi

10 Luke viii

19 Rev iii 6

13 22

Almighty Helper ready to overcome their strong enemy, and to deliver sinners from his hateful dominion. And let all those who hear, believe, and obey the Saviour, according to the will of God the Father, rejoice and glory in their relation to him, who will assuredly own every one of them, as his brother, his sister, or his mother.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV. V. 1—20. (Notes, &c. Matt. xiii. 1—23. Marg. Ref.) ^a Christ is the sower; his Gospel-

truths, the seed; careless hearers, the way-side; Satan and his agents, the fowls; professors, affected, but not changed in heart, the stony ground; trouble and persecution, the scorching sun; carnal cares, the thorns; renewed hearts, the good ground; their different degrees of grace and good works, their fruit. (Brown.)—^b See, saith Theophylact, how rare are good men, and how few are saved! for only a fourth part of the seed fell on good ground, and was preserved. Observe here also the gradation. The seed sown by the high-way

Matt. ix. 1-3
 Mark v. 1 Luke
 viii. 8-10
 John xi. 7-9
 v. 1-10
 See Matt. v.
 15. Marg.
 16. xii. 9, 10
 17. xiii. 2-4
 Matt. x. 36, 37
 Luke vii. 17
 2. 3. xxi. 20
 xx. 2. 1 Cor. iv.
 5. 1 John. 1-3
 Rev. vi. 15
 Rev. ii. 7, 11, 12, 29
 1. Prov. ix. 27
 Luke vii. 18
 Acts xxi. 11
 Heb. ii. 1 John
 iv. 2 Pet. i. 1
 Matt. vii. 2
 Luke vi. 37, 38
 2 Cor. 12. 6
 1. x. 14. iv. 3.
 John. 22. 8. 27.
 1. Matt. xiii. 12
 xxv. 28. 29. Luke
 vii. 18. xvi. 9-
 12. xix. 21-26 John xv. 2.

21 ¶ And he said unto them, " Is a candle brought to be put under a * bushel, or under a bed ? and not to be set on a candlestick ?

22 For " there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested ; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.

23 If " any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

24 And he saith unto them, " Take heed what ye hear. " With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you : and unto you that " hear shall more be given.

25 For " he that hath, to him shall

be given : and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

26 ¶ And he said, " So is the kingdom of God, " as if a man should cast seed into the ground ;

27 And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring " and grow up, he knoweth not how.

28 For " the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself ; " first the " blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

29 But when the fruit is " brought forth, immediately " he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

Joel iii. 13. Matt. xiii. 30, 40-43 Rev. xiv. 14-17.

' comes not up at all ; the seed sown upon stony ground ' comes up, but increaseth not ; the seed sown among ' thorns increaseth, but bears no fruit ; the seed sown ' on good ground, brings forth fruit to perfection.' (Whitby.) They that were about, &c. (10.) Such as more constantly attended on Christ, along with his apostles. — To them that are without. (11.) ' It was customary to ' the Jews to give this title to the heathen ; our Saviour ' therefore, by applying it to them, seems to hint, that in ' a short time the kingdom of God would be taken from ' them ; and they themselves would be " them that were " without." (Whitby.) How then, &c. (13.) Our Lord here gently reproved the dullness of his disciples, whose minds were in a measure obscured by those prejudices and carnal expectations, by which the unbelieving Jews were entirely blinded ; and he intimated, that, as he had many things to teach in parables, they ought to apply their minds to the attentive consideration of them, that they might be able to explain them to others also. *Lusts of other things.* (19.) Anxious cares in the poor, and the snares of deceitful riches in the wealthy, are peculiarly unfavourable to religious improvement ; but the eager desire and pursuit of any earthly object has the same effect, whatever a man's outward circumstances may be.

V. 21, 22. (Notes, &c. Matt. v. 13-16. vi. 22, 23. xiii. 12.) These verses were intended to call the attention of the disciples to the word of Christ. By thus instructing them, he meant to qualify them for instructors of others ; as candles are lighted, not to be covered, but to be placed on candlesticks, that they may give light to the room. The meaning of his parables and discourses, though at that time concealed from the people, was afterwards to be manifested and spread abroad in the most extensive and perspicuous manner. ' These words being ' only spoken to Christ's disciples, when he was alone ' with them, I think it best to explain them accordingly ; ' as if Christ had said, I give you a clear light, by which ' you may discern the import of this and other parables ; ' but this I do, not that you may keep it to yourselves, ' but that it may by you be made beneficial to others. ' And though I give you the knowledge of " these mysteries of the Kingdom of God," ' privately ; I do it not

' that you should keep them so : for there is nothing thus ' hid, which should not be made manifest ; neither was ' any thing made secret by me, but that it should afterwards come abroad. Had the apostles so obscurely ' delivered or wrote the Gospels, and those other Scriptures ' which contain the rule of faith, even in things necessary ' to be believed, or done, unto salvation, as the Romanists ' pretend they did, they would have hid " this candle " under a bushel," and not have manifested it to the world, ' as Christ here requires them to do.' (Whitby.)

V. 23-25. The apostles were here exhorted to bow their ears, and apply their minds attentively to the words of Christ : to take heed what they heard, and how they heard it ; that they might receive the truth only, and all of it ; and that they might impart it to others as well as adorn it by their own lives. For according to their faithfulness and correspondent conduct as his ministers, or the contrary, they would at length be dealt with : and more knowledge, wisdom, and spiritual gifts, would be given to those of them, who heard the word in faith and with attention, according to that general rule of his kingdom, which we have repeatedly considered. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 26-29. This parable, which is not found in any other of the Gospels, represents the manner in which the kingdom of God gains ground in the world. In this respect, he who preaches " the word of the truth of the Gospel," may be likened to a husbandman, that sows " his seed and then leaves it ; as knowing that he can do nothing more towards a crop. Accordingly he sleeps by night, and rises in the morning, to attend on his other business ; not being solicitous about the seed, as if the increase depended on his constant attention to it. In the mean time it springs up, and by imperceptible degrees grows to maturity ; and he is so far from managing the process, that he cannot comprehend it : for the earth, made fruitful by the Creator's power and goodness, and receiving the influence of the sun, rain, and varying seasons, as ordered by him, spontaneously produceth the increase. A small blade first appears ; and, during the changes of the weather, it sometimes is more flourishing, and at others it seems to wither ; yet at length it ears, fills, and ripens, and the husbandman gathers in the crop, which God hath

d. Lam. ii. 13. Mat.
xii. 16. Luke
xiii. 19-20. 21.
Matt. xxi. 31-
32. Luke xxi. 31.
Gen. xxi. 17, 18.
Ps. lxxxi. 16-19.
Is. ii. 22. Jer. x.
12. 13. 14. 15.
22. Eccl. xxi. 22.
23. Dan. ix. 24.
24. 14. Am.
ix. 17-5. Mic.
vi. 1. 2. Zech.
xiii. 30. 31.
32. 33. Jer. xxi.
9-11. 12. 13.
14. 15. 16. 17.
18. 19. 20. 21.
22. 23. 24. 25.
26. 27. 28. 29.
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86. 87. 88. 89.
90. 91. 92. 93.
94. 95. 96. 97.
98. 99. 100.

30 ¶ And he said, ^a Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

31 *It is* ^a like a grain of mustard-seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, ^a is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:

32 But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and ^a shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may ^b lodge under the shadow of it.

33 And ^a with many such parables spake he the word unto them, ^k as they were able to hear it.

34 But without a parable spake he not unto them: and, ^l when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

35 ¶ And ^m the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, ⁿ Let us pass over unto the other side.

36 And when they had sent away the

multitude, they took him ^a even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships.

37 And ^a there arose a ^a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

38 And he was ^a in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: ^a and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, ^a carest thou not that we perish?

39 And ^a he arose, and ^a rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

40 And he said unto them, ^a Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have ^a no faith?

41 And they ^a feared exceedingly, and said one to another, ^b What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him!

LXXXIX. 7. Jon. i. 9. 15, 16. — a. Mat. ii. 5. Heb. xii. 28. Rev. xv. 4. — b. vii. 27. Matt. viii. 27. xiv. 32, 33. Luke ix. 39. viii. 25.

given him as the increase of his seed sown. Thus ministers sow the good seed of the word, and use other appointed means of obtaining success; but God alone gives the increase. The minister, therefore, should diligently do his duty; but with resignation, composure, and dependence on God. When he has the opportunity of watching the effects of his own labours, he finds his hopes and fears continually fluctuate; he meets with disappointments, which he can by no means prevent, and success where he had given up the hope of it: but much of the good done will generally be unknown at the time, and perhaps become visible after his death. However, the labour of that man, who is faithful and diligent, will not be in vain; the seed will find hearts prepared by the grace of God to receive it; and, under the influences of the Spirit, it will spring up; and from convictions of sin, and inquiries after salvation, it will grow up into a more solid judgment, greater experience, humility, and simplicity; and thus proceed to fruitfulness in good works. In this manner souls will be prepared for heaven: and when their measure of services and trials is completed, and they are made ready for the glory and felicity intended for them, the Lord will gather them, as the wheat of his harvest, into his garner; and they, who have been the instruments of their conversion and sanctification, will, at last, glorify God for the blessed increase of their patient labours; which, perhaps, at the time, they concluded to be almost entirely unsuccessful.

V. 30-34. (Notes, Matt. xiii. 31-35.) 'The kingdom of the Messiah, before his death; and burial in the earth, will have only a small and insensible increase; but after his resurrection, it will spring up, and become the greatest of all kingdoms.' (Whitby.)

As they were, &c. (34.) Our Lord taught the people in that manner, which most suited their state of mind. They were too much prejudiced to receive and profit by

such plain declarations of doctrinal truth, as his apostles afterwards made; but his parables, without giving needless offence, or affording his enemies any advantage, were calculated to excite inquiries, and to prepare the way for fuller and more particular instructions, when the proper season arrived. And he privately expounded all to his disciples; and so prepared the way for that "great plainness of speech," which he intended that they should use. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 35-41. (Notes, Matt. viii. 23-27.) All the parables contained in this chapter seem to have been spoken during the remainder of that day, on which the friends of Jesus were dissatisfied with his unwearied and zealous labours; yet having persisted in them till the evening, he put to sea, even "as he was," in the ship whence he had preached, and without any peculiar attention to his health, ease, or indulgence, after such great fatigues! Such an example did he set us, of enduring hard-ship, and avoiding all needless regard to ourselves, whilst employed in doing good to the souls of men!

Curst, &c. This clause intimates, that the apostles, amidst their terrors, were tempted to censure their Lord, who lay asleep, as if regardless of their danger. (Marg. Ref. Note, Luke x. 38-42.) That ye have no faith? Or rather, "that ye have not faith?" that is, faith proportioned to the occasion, and sufficient to exclude these needless terrors.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-25.

Whilst we lament that so few of the human species are instructed according to the pure Gospel of Christ, and that so large a majority of those, who are thus favoured, derive no real benefit from it, let us look to ourselves and

CHAP. V.

Jesus casts out a legion of devils, and suffers them to enter and destroy a herd of swine, 1—13. The owners entreat his departure; and the man who had been possessed, desires to be with him, but

is sent to declare what Jesus had done for him, 14—20. Jairus entreats Christ to heal his daughter, 21—24. By the way he heals a woman of an inveterate issue of blood, 25—34. He raises Jairus's daughter to life, 35—43.

our own hearts, that they be not as fallow ground, or the way-side, through carelessness and inattention. Satan is ever active and vigilant, in preventing the success of the Gospel; and if men do not immediately secure what they have heard, by meditation, prayer, faith, and obedience, he will immediately take it away from their hearts and memories. Nor will any impressions be durable, that are not deep: the heart, that is not broken, humbled, and changed, will not be made fruitful; and superficial convictions or affections, and that profession which springs from them, will gradually vanish, and come to nothing, especially when persecution and affliction arise because of the word. We cannot be real Christians, if we "have not that root in ourselves," which would withstand the most scorching sun of persecution, should it fall upon us: but many prove, in the most quiet times, how they would act in such trying scenes; whilst "the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things, choke the word, and they become unfruitful." Let us then look to the Lord, that by his new-creating grace our hearts may become good ground; and that the good seed of the word may produce a large increase in our lives, of all those good words and works, "which are through Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God the Father." Thus will it appear, that, "to us it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God:" whilst numbers know it not, because of the pride, unbelief, and carnality of their hearts; and so, being given up by God, "they see, but do not perceive; they hear, but do not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins be forgiven them." Unless we understand this parable, which is so plain and universally interesting, how shall we understand all those parables under which divine mysteries are couched? Let us then attend more diligently to instruction, and pray more earnestly for a humble teachable disposition, and for the illumination of the Holy Spirit; for we are called to shine as lights in this dark world: and though our light is only as the feeble glimmering of a candle, compared with the splendour of the Sun of Righteousness, yet we may hope to receive from him, and to communicate to others, some rays of heavenly wisdom; provided we do not put our candle under a bushel, but endeavour to let it shine before men, in our profession of the truth, and a conversation consistent with it. Though no human teaching can make "the natural man receive the things of the Spirit of God," yet it is our business, to make known the great truths of the Gospel, according to the duties of our respective stations. But as so many discordant doctrines are propagated on every side, it is incumbent on us to take heed *what*, as well as *how*, we hear. If we believe, obey, and impart to others, the blessed truths of God's word, all blessings will be measured to us in great abundance; but we be to those, who reject, corrupt, or conceal, the

light, which Christ came into the world to diffuse among mankind! For, all their earthly possessions, admired abilities, and valuable opportunities, shall be taken from them; and they will be left to eternal contempt, poverty, and misery.

V. 26—41.

In endeavouring to promote the kingdom of God, we should rest satisfied with having done our part, and wait in patient hope on God, that he may do his also: for he reserves to himself the power of giving the increase; and he does it in an incomprehensible manner, that he may secure the whole honour of it to his own great name. We should therefore bear up against discouragement, though we do not perceive much success in our labours: we ought indeed to redouble our diligence, and become more fervent in prayer; but if we be ever so anxious, we cannot make the seed grow, nor understand why it springs up in one case, and not in another. The effects we may indeed often see, but the cause and method of operation we cannot comprehend. Let us then go on with our work, in cheerful assurance, that "in due season we shall reap, if we faint not;" and let us seek unto the Lord to give the increase, wherever the word is preached, and that all Christians may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus, and daily ripen for the glorious harvest. We should not despise feeble beginnings, either in individuals, or in the diffusing of the light of divine truth in dark places, as the kingdom of heaven is like the grain of mustard-seed, and as great consequences often spring from feeble causes and instruments. These things will not be obvious to others, but Christ will expound them to his disciples; and if we follow him closely, he will afford us his special presence, and he will teach us self-denial by his precepts and his example. Storms may indeed assail us, and our fears may be great, but faith will apply to him for help, and meet no disappointment. Even when he seemeth to slumber, he restrains the violence of the winds and waves, and the fury of wicked men and apostate spirits: and when he awaketh for our help, he will speak every tempest into a calm, and turn all our terrors into admiring, adoring love and gratitude. But while "he careth for us, that we perish not," he will rebuke our unbelief: and indeed our excessive fears in little difficulties and dangers, sometimes seem to indicate that we have almost no faith, notwithstanding all that we have heard, witnessed, and experienced, of his power, truth, and love, who is the mighty God and the Prince of peace, and who never faileth those who trust in him. Instead therefore of dreading outward dangers, to the dishonour of the Lord, let us reverently, fully, and thankfully adore him, whom "even the winds and seas obey."

a. ix. 35. Mark
v. 29—34
Luke viii. 26.

AND they ^a came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

2 And when he came out of the ship, immediately there met him ^b out of the tombs, a man ^c with an unclean spirit.

3 Who had ^d his dwelling among the tombs; and ^e no man could bind him, no, not with chains :

4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains. and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces : neither could any ^f man ^g tame him.

5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,

7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, ^h What have I to do with thee, Jesus, ⁱ thou ^j Son of the most high God ? ^k I adjure thee by God, ^l that thou torment me not.

8 (For he said unto him, ^m Come out of the man, ⁿ thou unclean spirit.)

9 And he asked him, ^o What is thy name ? And he answered, saying, My name is ^p Legion ; for we are many.

10 And ^q he besought him much that he would not send them out of the country.

11 Now there was there, nigh unto the mountains, a great ^r herd of swine feeding.

12 And ^s all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

13 And forthwith Jesus ^t gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine ; and ^u the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand,) and were choked in the sea.

14 And ^v they that fed the swine fled, and told ^w it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.

15 And they come to Jesus, and see ^x him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind ; ^y and they were afraid.

NOTES.

CHAP. V. V. 1. The region of the Gergesenes was of a broader extent than that of the Gadarenes, which was included in it.

V. 2—13. (Notes, &c. Matt. viii. 28—34. Luke viii. 26—39.) St. Matthew gives a brief account of two demoniacs, who were dispossessed on this occasion : but Mark and Luke omit the mention of one of them, (who was not perhaps so remarkable a case either before or after his cure,) to record that of the other more fully. Many circumstances therefore here require consideration. It is probable that our Lord had landed intentionally near the place where the demoniac wandered, and was immediately met by him. He was possessed "with an unclean Spirit," or a *fallen Spirit*, impure and unholy, and an enemy to the authority of God, in whose judgment all sin is *uncleanliness* ; and "filthiness of flesh or spirit." Though many evil spirits possessed the man, one is first mentioned, who may be considered as the ruler of the company. The force which they exerted by the limbs of the man was so great, that his friends could by no means confine him ; for he had repeatedly broken even the fetters and chains, with which he had been bound, and was so fierce that he could not be tamed : he was therefore left to wander, night and day, without clothes, among the solitary tombs and on the mountains, where he cried hideously, as one in excessive anguish, and cut himself with stones, by running among them, lying down naked on them, or in a frantic manner. Thus was he most wretched in himself,

the grief of all his friends, and the terror and nuisance of the neighbourhood ; an apt emblem of the more desperate children of disobedience, in whom Satan reigns and works without control. Yet, as soon as Jesus appeared, he came and prostrated himself before him ; and the unclean spirit, that spake by the man's organs of speech, earnestly entreated and adjured him by God, (who had respited them from torment for a time, and given them permission to tempt and harass the sinful race of men,) that he would not consign them immediately to the place of punishment ; nor even drive them out of that region, where they had it seems hitherto continued unmolested. The permission craved and obtained, of entering into the swine, and the effects of that permission in the destruction of the swine, have been already considered. But we here further learn, that our Lord demanded of the spirit that spake to him, what his name was ? To which he answered, that it was "Legion ;" and that he had this name, because "they were many." A legion is well known to have been a body of Roman soldiers, which at that time consisted of above six thousand men. This therefore gives us a most tremendous view of the subject ; though we determine nothing concerning the precise number which combined, under one head, in harassing the man. For the question was doubtless asked, and the answer extorted, in order to display the number, power, and malice of those unclean spirits, which Sadducees, ancient and modern, have denied, and which most men are not unwarily to disregard.

16 And they that saw *it*, told them how it befel to him that was possessed with the devil, and *also* concerning the swine.

17 And they began ² to pray him to depart out of their coasts.

18 And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil, ^a prayed him that he might be with him.

19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not; but saith unto him, ^b Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

20 And he departed, and began to publish in ^c Decapolis, how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.

21 ¶ And when Jesus was ^d passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him, and he was nigh unto the sea.

22 And, behold, ^e there cometh one of the ^f rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, ^g he fell at his feet,

23 And ^h besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death; *I pray thee*, come and ⁱ lay thy

hands on her, that she may be healed, and she shall live.

24 And *Jesus* ^k went with him; and much people followed him, ^l and thronged him.

25 And ^m a certain woman, which had ⁿ an issue of blood, ^o twelve years,

26 And had ^p suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was ^q nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,

27 When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and ^r touched his garment:

28 For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.

29 And ^s straightway the ^t fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that ^u plague.

30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that ^v virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

31 And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

32 And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.

27. 1. 24 Gen
xxvi. 16 Deut.
v. 5 1 Kings
xiii. 14 15 Matt
viii. 2a Luke v.
8 viii. 37 Acts
x. 33
37. 17 Ps cxvi.
12 Luke viii.
36 19 xxix. 15
—17 xxviii. 42
45 Phil. 1. 23. 24.
D. Ps. lxxv. 18 15
xxviii. 15—20
John. 11. 1—37
vi. 29—27 John.
11. 1. 8c. John
19. 29 Acts
xv. 1. 1—21.
xxvi. 4—29.

ecvii. 31. Matt
v. 23

d Matt. ix. 1. Luke
viii. 40.
e Mat. ix. 18 19.
f Luke viii. 41, 42
John xiii. 14.
Acts xiii. 15
xxviii. 8, 17.
g 33 Matt. ix. 1.
Luke v. 8. viii.
28 Acts x. 2.
36 Rev. xxii. 6.
h vi. 29—27. ix.
21, 22. 2 Sam.
xii. 15, 16. Ps. 1.
i Luke ix. 34.
vii. 2, 4. 2 John
iv. 46. 17. xi. 3.
j vi. 5 h. 13. xvi.
19. 2 Kings. 1.
Matt. viii. 3.
Luke iv. 48 xiii.
14. Acts xxviii.
9. Jam. v. 14, 15

k Luke viii. Acts
x. 36.
131. 1. 9 10 20.
l Luke viii. 42.
42. xii. 1. 2. 3.
3.
m Matt. ix. 20—
22 Luke viii.
43 44.
n Lev. xv. 20 25
—29.
o Luke xiii. 11.
John v. 5 6.
Acts iv. 22 18.
30. 31.
p John xiv. 4. Jer.
vii. 22. xxx. 13.
11. 8.
q Ps. cxviii. 13.
r vi. 56. 2 Kings
xiii. 21. Mat.
xv. 6. A. 15 v.
15. xix. 12.

s Ex. xv. 26. Job.
xxviii. 24. 25.
Ps. xxx. 2. ciii.
3. Ps. cxv. 20.
t Lev. xx. 18.
u 34. 1. 10. 1
Rom. viii. 37.
Luke vi. 21.
x xiii. vi. 19
viii. 48 1 Feb.
11. 9. Greek.

y Luke viii. 45
ix. 12.

V. 14—20. The success of the stratagem formed by these evil spirits, to prejudice the covetous minds of the Gadarenes against Jesus, has been noted: but we must not overlook the contrary conduct of the man who was dispossessed. He now was found sitting, in proper clothing, composed and rational, at the feet of Jesus, (like Mary,) to hear his instructions: and when our Lord entered the ship to go away, according to the request of the Gadarenes, he desired leave to accompany him; being full of gratitude to his Benefactor, and desirous of becoming his stated follower; and perhaps fearing the return of the unclean spirits, in case he were left behind. But Jesus had another design in the transaction; and therefore he refused to grant his request, ordering him to return to his friends, and inform them what great things the Lord, in his tender compassion, had done for him. Accordingly he departed, and published in Decapolis, a region in which were ten cities, what great things Jesus, (whom he understood to be the Lord,) had done for him: and as they had been generally acquainted with his former miserable condition, and now saw him perfectly rational, and in good health, they were exceedingly astonished at hearing his thankful account of his cure. Thus this very man became the wisest, happiest, and most useful person in the country, and a preacher of Christ to his friends and neighbours; being at the same time a living demonstration of his power and

mercy: and we may be sure that he was made the instrument of procuring a more favourable reception to him and his disciples, when they went among them afterwards. (vii. 31—37.)

V. 21—24. (Notes, &c. Matt. ix. 18—26. Luke viii. 40—56.) The two miracles, contained in the remainder of this chapter, were briefly recorded by St. Matthew; but the particular consideration of them was reserved for this place. Our Lord, being returned to Capernaum, was speedily surrounded by a great multitude of people, who were glad to see him again. And not long after, he was addressed by a ruler of the synagogue, called Jairus, who seems to have been a person of some distinction in the city. (Marg. Ref.) Being in deep distress, he approached Jesus, in the most humble manner; and, casting himself at his feet, besought him to accompany him without delay, as his only daughter, only twelve years old, lay at the point of death, and perhaps might even then be dead: yet he believed, that if Jesus went and laid his hands upon her, she would recover. He seems not to have thought that Christ could cure her at a distance, or that he could raise her from the dead; though it is probable this was subsequent to the resurrection of the widow's son at Nain. Our Lord, however, readily granted his request, and set off immediately to go to his house.

Ev. 11. Luke i
12. 29. vii. 47.

a. P. Inxi 16. cii
2-5. cxi. 12-
11.

b. Marc. ix. 1. 22.
Luk. x. vii. 40.

c. x. 52. Luke xii. 1
20. vii. 13. xvi. 12.

d. 1. xvi. 12.
19. xvi. 12.

e. 1. xvi. 12. 17.
xvi. 12. 2. xvi. 12.

f. Luke xii. 47.
1. Luke vii. 6. 7.

g. John i. 29. 32.
3. 3.

h. x. 17. Marc.
xvi. 17. 18.

i. 1. 17. 18.
18. 18.

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33. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

34. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

35. ¶ While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house, certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?

36. As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.

37. And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

38. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.

39. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

40. And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.

41. And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha, Cumi; which is, being interpreted, Daughter, (I say unto thee,) Arise.

42. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years: and they were astonished with a great astonishment.

43. And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

V. 25.—34. Whilst Jesus was walking to the house of Jairus, thronged by the surrounding multitude, he wrought another most remarkable miracle, the account of which comes in as a parenthesis. A woman who had been afflicted for twelve years with an issue of blood, which both debilitated her frame and rendered her ceremonially unclean, took that opportunity of applying for a cure. She had in vain tried other methods of recovery, and had thus impoverished herself; so that, (unless by miracle,) she had no prospect but that of lingering sufferings terminating in death. The nature of her disorder made her reluctant to mention it, and she hoped to be cured without: she entertained the highest thoughts of Christ's power and sanctity; but her views of his knowledge, and of the manner in which he wrought his miracles, were confused: she therefore concluded, that if she did but touch his clothes, (even the border, or the fringe, of his garment,) she should certainly receive a cure; as if this could have been done by any natural efficacy, without his being conscious of it! In pursuance of this design, she seized the opportunity when Jesus was surrounded by the multitude, and coming behind him, touched his garment: nor was she disappointed; for notwithstanding the misapprehensions and infirmity mixed with her faith, her disorder was instantaneously removed, and her impaired vigour completely restored; and not by slow degrees, as is commonly the case after the removal of such long continued diseases.—Had the matter terminated here, she would have come short of the instruction, comfort, and advantage, which the Saviour intended her; he would have been deprived of the honour of so extraordinary a miracle; and many thousands would have been left without the encouraging instructions to be learned from the transaction. Our Lord therefore, being conscious that *virtue*, or a divine energy, was gone forth from him to effect this cure, demanded who

had touched his clothes? When all that were near him denied that they had touched him with any special intention, (for the woman seems to have retired to a little distance,) Peter and the other apostles expressed their surprise, that he should ask the question; for as numbers thronged him, how could it be expected but that some must touch him, without intending any offence? But Jesus still insisted on it, that some person had touched him, with a special intention, and had received a cure from his power. And the woman, finding that she could not be concealed, and being alarmed lest he should rebuke her intrusion, came trembling, and fell down before him, and in the presence of all the people declared the whole of her case. As the touch of persons thus diseased communicated ceremonial pollution, this perhaps increased her fears. But our Lord, so far from showing any displeasure, addressed her by the affectionate appellation of "daughter;" assured her that her cure was the evidence and happy effect of her faith, by which she had been made whole, or saved; and exhorted her to be of good comfort, and to go away in peace, and to rest assured that she was now finally delivered from that tedious affliction, with which she had so long been chastened.

V. 35.—43. The preceding transaction would occasion delay, and increase the anxiety of Jairus; but his trial was much greater, when messengers came from his house to inform him that his daughter was dead; and to observe to him that it was needless to give the *Teacher* any further trouble. When Jesus heard this, he exhorted Jairus not to fear for his daughter's recovery, but to believe assuredly that he was able to restore her. He then dismissed the multitude, and even all his disciples, except Peter, James, and John; that he might be attended by a competent number of witnesses, and yet keep at the utmost distance from ostentation, in that display of his power which he was

CHAP. VI.

Jesus preaches and is despised in his own country, 1—6. He sends out the apostles

about to make. When he arrived at the house, he found the family in great distress and confusion: the mourners and minstrels were already called in, as it was customary on such occasions; and whilst some played mournful tunes, others vented the most doleful lamentations. But Jesus reproved them, bidding them not weep, and assuring them that she was not dead, so as to continue long in that state; but was only fallen into a sleep, from which he was about to awake her. But they, knowing that she was really dead, treated his words with contempt, and indecently laughed him to scorn; though they must often have heard of his miracles, and were acquainted with the wisdom and holiness of his character! He therefore put them all out of the room, after he had drawn from them this attestation of the certainty of her death; and, having none with him but the parents of the damsel and his three apostles, he took hold of her hand, and said aloud, as having power over death and the spirits of the dead, "*Talitha, Cumi,*" or "*damsel, arise;*" and immediately she arose and walked, to the inexpressible astonishment of the spectators, and doubtless the exceeding joy and gratitude of her before afflicted parents. Our Lord then commanded them not to mention the circumstance to any person, as it was sure to be sufficiently known, and in fact the fame of it soon spread abroad very widely. He also directed them to give her something to eat, by which it appeared that she was recovered to complete health; and it was intimated, that her life must be preserved as before, by ordinary means, being the same as that of others here on earth, and not like that to which we shall be restored by the general resurrection. It is worthy of observation, that of the three persons, whom Christ is particularly recorded to have raised from the dead, one was the *only* son of an aged widow, another this *only* daughter of Jairus, and the third the beloved brother of Martha and Mary: so much compassion and condescension did he show to the feelings of natural affection! *Talitha, Cumi*, is supposed to be Syriac or Chaldee, and not Hebrew.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—13.

This chapter calls us to contemplate the varied glories of our Redeemer's power and love; and each of the instances here set before us may be considered, not only as a miracle, but also as an emblem of his gracious operations on the souls of men. If a whole legion of apostate spirits were combined against one man, who can conceive the numbers which there are in this wicked world, of which their great leader is the god and prince? The intention and tendency of all their unremitted efforts are, to destroy mankind, both in body and soul, and to render them miserable and mischievous. May these alarming thoughts warn every one of us to flee to that refuge, which God hath prepared for us in the kingdom of his Son. All unconverted sinners are under a more fatal

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to preach, with power over unclean spirits, 7—13. The opinions of Herod and others concerning Christ, 14—16. Herod imprisons and beheads John Bap-

possession, than that which distracted men's minds and destroyed their health; (though it is owing to the restraining power of God, that we are preserved even from these dire calamities:) but some wicked men seem to be possessed by a Demon, whose name is Legion, their evil propensities and actions are so varied and numerous! Frequently we see persons of this kind carried away by their own passions, and Satan's temptations, into every place of pollution and recess of iniquity; so that they dwell with them "whose feet go down to death, whose steps take hold on hell." Neither fear, shame, conscience, nor regard to interest, or health, can restrain them: neither the authority of parents, the counsel of friends, the requirements and sanctions of human laws, the feeling of present painful effects of their vices, nor the dread of the wrath to come, can deter them from their destructive courses. However they be bound and fettered, their strong corruptions and evil habits break loose from every restriction, and "no man can tame them." Thus they reduce themselves to penury, disease, a prison, or an ignominious death; in the mean time they are the reproach and grief of their friends, the terror and nuisance of the neighbourhood, and a mortified and pernicious part of the community. Yet if Jesus be pleased to exert his power, he can bring the most abandoned and hardened of them to tremble and fall down before him, and thus effect a blessed change in their character and conduct. But the poor sinner, when this work is first begun, often fears that the gracious Saviour means to torment or destroy him; and is ready to cry out, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God?" This arises from the artifice of these malignant enemies, who are reluctant to leave those places or persons, over whom they have hitherto reigned without a rival. But they dare not resist the power of Christ, who can, if he pleases, consign them to the place of torment: and knowing this, they on some occasions even become his supplicants, and earnestly beseech and adjure him to respite their punishment, or continue their allowance to tempt and distress the sinful race of men. But all the hosts of hell, formidable as they are, cannot destroy one frantic sinner, or so much as possess one swine, except our Redeemer grants them permission! This is a most encouraging thought to the believer; but what comfort can Satan's willing servants derive from it? Yet even in respect of them his power is limited; for the same agency, that hurried the swine into the sea, would have been sufficient for the immediate destruction of their avaricious possessors, had not the power of Christ restrained it. Long suffering and mercy may therefore be recognized in those corrections, by which men are deprived of property, whilst their lives are preserved, and warning is given them to seek the salvation of their souls.

V. 14—20.

Losses and alarms frequently terrify and exasperate sin-
2 F

list, at the instigation of Herodias, 17—29. The apostles return to Jesus, 30—33. He teaches and miraculously feeds the multitudes, 31—44. He walks on

the sea to his disciples, 45—52. He lands at Gennesaret and heals the sick, who but touched the hem of his garment, 53—56.

ners, instead of promoting repentance: and they, who are determined not to part with iniquitous gain, or to mortify their lusts, are as averse to the Gospel of Christ as unclean spirits themselves are. But when the vilest transgressor is delivered by the power of Jesus from the possession of Satan and the bondage of sin, he will gladly sit at the feet and hear the word of his great Deliverer. Being "come to himself," and to "his right mind," he will now learn to love and cleave to Christ, and long to be with him and like him. When these desires grow very vigorous, and are accompanied with an assured hope of heavenly felicity, he is willing "to be absent from the body, that he may be present with the Lord;" no wonder, therefore, that he chooses rather to part with father and mother, or the nearest relations and most valued possessions, than to forsake Christ, and lose the benefit and comfort of his instruction, and of communion with him. Words cannot express the blessed change that takes place, when Jesus delivers such wretched slaves of Satan, as have been before described, and numbers them among his saints and servants. Instead of their former abject misery, they now enjoy a felicity before unknown; they henceforth become the ornament and blessing of their families; they are made partakers of a heavenly wisdom and a glorious liberty; and they are rendered useful in those communities, to which before they were a terror or a temptation. They go among their friends and neighbours, to bear testimony to Christ, showing what great things he hath done for them, and hath had compassion on them: and whilst their conduct evinces the reality and excellency of the change, they often excite great attention, and are made the instruments of inducing their more orderly neighbours to hearken to the Gospel, which before they neglected. Nay, the Lord sometimes makes choice of such converts for his ministers: and whilst they publish through cities and countries, what great things Jesus hath done for them, their simple testimony, confirmed by their characters, renders them extensive blessings, perhaps in those places where they were once most mischievous. Indeed we seem to be continued in this world of sin and sorrow, after our conversion, chiefly to declare and display, by word and deed, the Saviour's power and grace among our fellow sinners.

V. 21—34.

Our blessed Lord will not obtrude himself on those, who are not disposed to entertain him; nor refuse his presence and salvation to any, whose hearts are prepared to welcome him. The feeling of distress, for which men can obtain no adequate remedy from themselves or others, is frequently the means of bringing them to Christ: and thus severe family-trials are sometimes appointed in love, to show those in affluence the vanity of their distinctions; and so lead them to inquire after a better portion and a spiritual salvation. They, who are in temporal distress, readily find words to express their meaning and desires:

how is it, then, that men experience such difficulty in presenting their supplications before God? Certainly, because they have not so distinct an understanding of their wants, nor so deep a feeling of their dangers and miseries. There are different degrees and exercises of faith, where it is vital and saving; but that which most honours Christ, will be most advantageous to us. The history of his life is an account of his continuance in doing good, without weariness or intermission; so that we know not whether we should most admire his divine power, or his beneficent use of it: and whilst we derive encouragement from this reflection, let us learn to use our little ability in doing what we can to alleviate the miseries and promote the good of mankind. If we look around, we shall see many pious Christians wasted by disease, pinched by penury, and lodged in cottages, cellars, garrets, or alms-houses; whilst stately palaces are often scenes of riot to infidels, profligates, and cruel oppressors. But the prosperity of fools destroys them, and the afflictions of the righteous conduce to their everlasting felicity. Men often prove vain helpers even in temporal calamities, and only add to our sufferings by their efforts to relieve us; yet the aversion of sinners to seek help from God is in this respect very conspicuous; for they will try every method of redress, and persevere, after reiterated disappointments, in running to this and the other fellow-creature; yet they will not apply to him, who alone can render means and instruments successful, and who can help us when all other helpers fail! Thus many, through their own obstinacy, or for want of wholesome instruction, waste their time and strength to no purpose, by applying to physicians of no value, from whom they suffer many things, and get no better, but rather grow worse. Some run into diversions and gay company to pacify an uneasy conscience, or to relieve the dejection of their spirits; many plunge into a hurry of business, into abstruse speculations, or even into intemperance, for the same purpose; and others go about to establish their own righteousness, or torment themselves by vain superstitions; and so numbers perish miserably. But happy are they, who by many disappointments are led to hearken to the report of the Gospel, and to expect help from Jesus alone: for even their remaining infirmity and misapprehensions will not prevent their obtaining the desired blessing. The example before us may likewise instruct us to receive and encourage those, who seem humbly to rely on Christ for pardon and grace; though in many respects mistaken and defective. In proportion as our faith in Christ brings peace into our conscience, and destroys the love and power of sin, it is proved to be genuine; and the more singly we depend on him, and expect great things from him, the more evidently we shall find that he is become our salvation. Thus he gradually and effectually teaches his people by their own experience; he evinces to them his knowledge of their thoughts, their wants, and their difficulties; and he shows his power and love in relieving and helping them. But whilst we have

a Matt. xiii. 54.
b Luke iv. 16.

AND he went out from thence, ^a and came into his own country, and his disciples follow him.

b i. 21, 22, 33.
c Luke iv. 15, 31, 32.

2 And when the Sabbath-day was come, ^b he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, ^c From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

d John vii. 15.
e Acts iv. 13, 14.

f Matt. xiii. 55.
g Luke iv. 22.

h John vi. 42.
i Acts vii. 13.

j 2, 3, 1 Pet. ii. 4.
k xv. 40, 1 Cor. iv. 4, Gal. i. 19.

l John xiv. 22.
m Jude i.
n Acts i. 13.

o Matt. xi. 6.
p Luke ii. 34.
q 23-25, vii. 23, John vi. 60, 61, 1 Cor. i. 23.

3 Is not ^d this the ^e carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of ^f James, and ^g Joseph, and of ^h Juda, and ⁱ Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were ^j offended at him.

the benefit, he will secure to himself the glory, of all that he does for us: and he will at length bring to light, in numberless instances, the virtue that hath gone forth from him to heal those hidden evils of the heart, under which his people had groaned for years, before they applied to him. Yet, whilst multitudes throng around him, as it were, by crowding the places where the Gospel is preached, only here and there one thus touches him in humble faith, as the lives of most too plainly testify. Even the disciples of Christ are, in many instances, apt to express themselves dissatisfied with his words and works; with the dispensations of his providence and grace. This is the effect of remaining pride, ignorance, and unbelief: for no believer to this hour ever could conceive of his compassion and love so highly as they deserve, though he sometimes conceals them under a frown or a rebuke. Humble souls, therefore, in applying to him, are apt to tremble and fear, lest he should abhor or destroy them; whilst his heart yearns with pity, and he is about to say to them, as to his children, "Be of good comfort, go in peace, thy faith hath saved thee." For he will honour that faith, which honours him by seeking from him the blessings which he is exalted to bestow.

V. 35—43.

The Lord will not let any one, who waits on him, be a loser by his kindness to others: his delays are intended to render his favours more precious; he waits for our extremities, that he may manifest his glory, and encourage our faith and hope. He regards no application to him as a trouble, and no case can be desperate which he undertakes; we should therefore not yield to fear, but desire to be strengthened in faith, in the most difficult circumstances; and he will then fulfil his word, and all our expectations grounded on it. No wonder that worldly men make a tumult, with wailing and lamentation, when bereaved of those whom they love; for they have no prospect, or a very gloomy one, beyond the grave: but Christians should "not sorrow as men without hope, for them "who sleep in the Lord;" nor should they indulge grief, or affect to be inconsolable for any loss, as the Lord still liveth to be their never failing Friend and Comforter. In-

4 But Jesus said unto them, ^k A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

l Jer. xi. 21, 23.
m Matt. xiii. 57.
n Luke iv. 24.
o John iv. 44.

5 And ^l he could there do no mighty works, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.

p 1x. 23 Gen. xix. 22. To lig. 1. 2. Matt. xiii. 58. 18 Heb. iv. 2.

6 And he ^m marvelled because of their unbelief. ⁿ And he went round about the villages, teaching.

q 1x. 23 Gen. xix. 22. To lig. 1. 2. Matt. xiii. 58. 18 Heb. iv. 2.

7 ^o And he calleth unto him ^p the twelve, and began to send them forth by ^q two and two; and gave them ^r power over unclean spirits;

r 1x. 23 Gen. xix. 22. To lig. 1. 2. Matt. xiii. 58. 18 Heb. iv. 2.

8 And commanded them that they

s 1x. 23 Gen. xix. 22. To lig. 1. 2. Matt. xiii. 58. 18 Heb. iv. 2.

deed, death is but a sleep to believers; and we shall soon join our deceased Christian friends in that world, where sin and all its effects will be known no more. But our gracious Redeemer, whilst he rebukes our excessive sorrow, makes kind allowances to the feelings of nature and affection: and though we cannot now expect to have our deceased children or relatives restored to us, yet we may hope to experience consolations proportioned to our trials. —Whilst sinners will ridicule the truths and promises of Christ, and so exclude themselves from witnessing or experiencing their gracious accomplishment; he hath the power over death, the grave, and the unseen world; and he will ere long bring forth all the nations of the dead to appear before his awful tribunal, and to hear his powerful word, either calling them to inherit eternal felicity, or bidding them depart into everlasting punishment. May he then raise our souls from the death of sin to the life of righteousness; that we may now feed on his spiritual provisions, and walk with him in his holy ways, as the trophies and monuments of his grace; that when he shall at length appear, we may also appear with him in glory.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI. V. 1—4. (Notes, &c. Matt. xiii. 53—58.) In this account of our Lord's last visit to Nazareth, (as it appears to have been,) we find that the people asked "Is not this the carpenter?" whence it hath reasonably been concluded, that he had wrought with Joseph at this laborious business, during the former years of his life. Justin Martyr says, that, before he entered his office, he made plows and yokes, which are the work of carpenters. —By the Jewish canons, all fathers were bound to teach their children some trade.

V. 5, 6. Jesus could not with propriety, or the people did not give him the opportunity, by bringing their sick to be healed. It seems, however, that there were some exceptions; and therefore he wrought a few miraculous cures. The obstinate and unreasonable unbelief and contempt of the Nazarenes was truly wonderful, when all their advantages are considered: and our Lord is generally spoken of as affected with the scenes around him, according to the nature of them; in the same manner as we should be, except as sinful emotions are excited in us, from which he was perfectly free.

should ^a take nothing for *their* journey, ^b rel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not.

10 But ^a be shod with ^a sandals; and not put on two coats.

11 And ^a he said unto them, ^a In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place.

12 And ^a whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you: when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, ^a It shall be more tolerable for Sodom ^a and Gomorrah ^a in the day of judgment, than for that city.

13 And they went out, and ^a preached that men should repent.

14 And they ^a cast out many devils, and ^a anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

15 ¶ And ^a king Herod heard of him; (for ^a his name was spread abroad;) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.

16 Others said, That ^a it is Elias. And others said, That it is ^a a prophet, or as one of the prophets.

17 But when Herod heard thereof, he said, ^a It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead.

18 For ^a Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias's sake, his brother's wife: for he had married her.

19 For John had said unto Herod, ^a It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

20 Therefore ^a Herodias had ^a a quarrel with him, and would have killed him; but she could not.

21 And ^a when a convenient day was come, that Herod on ^b his birth-day made a supper to his lords, high-captains, and chief estates of Galilee;

22 And when ^a the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod, and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.

23 And ^a he swore unto her, ^a Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

24 And she went forth, and ^a said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, ^a The head of John the Baptist.

25 And she came in straightway ^a with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by ^a a charger the head of John the Baptist.

26 And the king ^a was exceeding sorry; yet, for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.

27 And immediately ^a the king sent ^a an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison;

28 And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel; and the damsel gave it to her mother.

29 And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

V. 7—12. (Notes, &c. Matt. x. xi. 20—24.)

V. 13. Learned men have bestowed some pains to show, that it was usual with the Jews to anoint the sick with oil, in order for their recovery: and some think that the apostles complied with this custom, without any direction from their Lord. But this is not at all probable; nor can we suppose that the miraculous effect would have followed, had they thus acted without orders. Doubtless, in this they observed the directions given them by Christ: and this observance was intended to be an outward sign of his inward operation; which was itself an emblem of healing our souls by the unction of his Holy Spirit. This practice was continued for some time in the Church, as the

token of a miraculous cure; but it was natural to leave it off, when miracles ceased: though the popish ceremony, (or sacrament, as they call it,) of *extreme unction* seems absurdly to have been derived from it; for that is not used in order to a miraculous cure, but when all hope of recovery is past. (Note, James v. 14.)

V. 14. *King Herod.* Thus his courtiers and flatterers called him, though only a Tetrarch, or governor of Galilee, under the Romans.

V. 15—29. (Notes, &c. Matt. xiv. 1—12.) 'It is easy to meet with a more striking instance than this, of the power of conscience over a guilty mind, or a how perpetually it goads the sinner, not

o 7. See Luke ix.
10. x 17.

J Acts i. 1. xx. 18
-2. 1 Tim iv.
12-15. Tit. 1.
6. 7. 1 Pet. v. 2.
3.
e 1. 45. iii. 7. 29.
Matt. xiv. 13.
John vi. 1.

† 51. 55. Mat. xv.
23-31. John vi.
2. John. 13.

o Matt. xiv. 14.
xv. 32. Luke ix.
11. Rom. xv. 2.
2. Heb. ii. 17.
iv. 15.
h Num. xxv. 17.
1 Kings xx. 17.
Jer. i. 8. Zech.
x. 2. Matt. ix.
1. 1. 1. 1-3.
1. Matt. xiv. 15.
Luke ix. 12.

30 ¶ And ^e the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, ^a both what they had done, and what they had taught.

31 And he said unto them, ^e Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

32 And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

33 And the people saw them departing, and many ^f knew him, and ran a foot thither out of all cities, and out-went them, and came together unto him.

34 And Jesus, when he came out, ^g saw much people, and was moved with compassion towards them, ^b because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

35 ¶ And ^k when the day was now far

spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed;

36 ^l Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat.

37 He answered and said unto them, ^m Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, ⁿ Shall we go and buy two hundred ^{*} pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?

38 He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, ^o Five, and two fishes.

39 And he commanded them to make ^p all sit down by companies upon the green grass.

40 And they sat down in ranks, ^q by hundreds, and by fifties.

41 And when he had taken the five

1. 1. 27. x. 2.
Matt. xv. 2.
xvi. 24.

m. viii. 2. 3. 2.
Kings iv. 42-44.
Matt. xiv. 16.
xv. 32. Luke ix.
13. John vi. 4-
10.
n Num. x. 13. 21.
-23. 2 Kings
x. 2. Mat. xv.
32. John vi. 7.
* Matt. xvi. 28.
Marg.

o viii. 5. Matt.
xiv. 17. 19. xv.
31. Luke ix. 13.
John vi. 9.

p 1 Kings x. 5.
Eccl. i. 5. 6. 1.
Cor. xiv. 33. 40.

q Luke ix. 14, 15.

only with well grounded apprehensions of impending, —vengeance, but with imaginary terrors and visionary dangers. There is reason to believe that Herod was of the sect called the Sadducees: yet his fears over-ruled all the prejudices of his sect, and raised up the semblance of the murdered Baptist, armed with the power of miracles, for the very purpose, (as he imagined,) of inflicting exemplary vengeance upon him for that atrocious deed, as well as for his adultery, his incest, and all his other crimes. Herod had been married a considerable time to the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia Petrea; but conceiving a violent passion for his brother Philip's wife, Herodias, he first seduced her affections from her husband, then dismissed his own wife, and married Herodias during the life-time of his brother.—The Baptist had the honesty and the courage to reproach the tyrant with the enormity of his guilt; he determined to do his duty, and to take the consequences. Herod observed John, that is, listened to him with attention and with pleasure: nay, he went further still, “he did many things,” which John exhorted him to do.—He perhaps showed more attention to many of his public duties, more gentleness to his subjects, more compassion to the poor, more equity in his judicial determinations, more regard to public worship; and vainly hoped, like many other audacious sinners, that this partial reformation, this half-way amendment, would avert the judgments, with which John threatened him. But the main point, the great object of John's reprehension, the incestuous adultery in which he lived, *that* he could not part with! What a picture does this hold out to us, of that strange thing called human nature! Of that inconsistency, that contradiction, that contrariety, which sometimes takes place in the heart of man, unsanctified and unsubdued by the power of divine

grace! And what an exalted idea does it give of the dignity of a truly religious character, like that of John, which compels even its bitterest enemies to reverence and to fear it! and forces even the most profligate and most powerful to pay an unwilling homage to excellence, at the very moment, perhaps, when they are meditating its destruction! The fate of John might have remained undecided for a considerable time, had not an incident taken place which determined it. The folly, the rashness, and the madness of such an oath, (as Herod's,) on so foolish an occasion, could be exceeded by nothing, but the horrible purpose to which it was perverted!—Herodias had a passion to gratify, stronger perhaps than any other, when it takes full possession of the human heart, and that was *revenge*. She had been mortally injured, as she conceived, by the Baptist: and she not only felt the highest indignation at this insult, but was afraid that his repeated remonstrances might at length prevail. Herod, conceiving himself, most absurdly, bound by his oath to comply even with this inhuman demand, preferred the real guilt of murder, to the false imputation of perjury. Herodias “had a quarrel against John:” according to the original, “she fastened and hung upon him,” and was determined not to let go her hold, till she had destroyed him. We are informed by Josephus, that Herod's marriage with Herodias drew on him the resentment of Aretas, the father of his first wife, who declared war against him, and defeated his army with great slaughter. This, says the historian, the Jews considered as the just judgment of God for his murder of John. Not long after this, both he and Herodias were deprived of their kingdom by the Roman Emperor, and sent into perpetual banishment: and it is added by another historian, that Salome met with a violent and untimely death. (Bp. Porteus.)

7 vii. 34. Mat. xiv. 19. Luke ix. 16. John xi. 41. xvi. 1.
 12 Deut. vii. 13. 1 Nam. ix. 16. Matt. xv. 36. xxvi. 26. Luke xxiv. 30. John vi. 11. 23. Acts xxviii. 35. Rom. xiv. 6. 1 Cor. x. 31. Col. iii. 17. 1 Tim. iv. 4. 5.
 1 vii. 9. 9. 2 Kings. iv. 42-43. Ps. cxv. 15. 16. Matt. xiv. 20. 21. xvi. 97. 38. Luke ix. 17. John vi. 12, 13. 1 vii. 19. 20. 3 Matt. xiv. 22. John vi. 15-17.

42 And they did all eat, and were filled.

43 And they took up ^a twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes.

44 And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

45 And ^a straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before ^a unto ^b Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.

46 And when he had sent them away, ^a he departed unto a mountain to pray.

47 ¶ And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.

48 And ^a he saw them toiling in rowing: (for the wind was contrary unto them;) and about ^b the fourth watch of the night ^c he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and ^d would have passed by them.

49 But when they saw him walking

upon the sea, they ^e supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out:

50 (For they all saw him, and were troubled:) and immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: ^f it is I; be not afraid.

51 And he went up unto them into the ship; ^g and the wind ceased: ^h and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.

52 For ⁱ they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for ^k their heart was hardened.

53 ¶ And when they had passed over they came into ^l the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore.

54 And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they ^m knew him,

55 And ⁿ ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.

56 And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, ^o they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might ^p touch if it were but ^q the border of his garment: and as many as touched him ^r were made whole.

* Or over against Bethsaida.
 7 vii. 22. Luke x. 13.

21 35 Matt. xiv. 23. Luke ix. 12. 1 Pet. ii. 21.

a Is. liv. 11. Jon. 1. 13. Matt. xiv. 24.

b Ex. xiv. 21. 1. Sam. x. 11. Luke xlii. 38. c Job. ix. 8. Ps. xciii. 4. civ. 3. d Gen. xix. 2. xxii. 26. Luke xxiv. 28.

e Job. liv. 14-16. Matt. xiv. 25. 26.

f Matt. xiv. 27. Luke xxiv. 37-41. John vi. 19. 20. xx. 19. 20. g iv. 33. Ps. vi. 28-30. Matt. vii. 26. 27. xiv. 28-32. Luke xvi. 24, 25. John vi. 21. h i. 27. ii. 12. iv. 4. v. 37. 1 vii. 18. cii. 17. 18. 21. Matt. xvi. 3-11. Luke xxiv. 25. xvi. 14.

i Matt. xiv. 34-36. Luke v. 1. John vi. 24.

m Ps. ix. 10. Phil. iii. 10. n ii. 1-3. iii. 7-11. Matt. iv. 23.

o Acts v. 15. p iii. 10. v. 27-28. Kings xlii. 21. Luke xi. 10. xxi. 51. Acts xix. 12. q Num. xv. 38. 39. Deut. xxvii. 12. Matt. ix. 20. Luke vii. 44. * Or. ii.

V. 30-56. (Notes, Matt. xiv. 13-16. Marg. Ref.) No leisure, &c. Or, "No convenient opportunity."

(2 Tim. iv. 2. Greek.) "Some cheats have pretended to cure diseases miraculously, and some have even attempted to raise the dead; yet no impostor, I believe, has ever yet been so bold, as to undertake to feed five thousand people at once with five loaves and two fishes, or to walk upon the sea." (Bp. Porteus.)

Ranks. (40.) The word is taken from beds in a garden, to which companies of people, seated in rows, twice the number in rank as in file, would bear some resemblance. Many expositors seem to think that the whole multitude formed one body, a hundred in rank and fifty in file: but the plural number, (*companies, companies; ranks, ranks, Gr.*;) leads us to conclude, that several distinct companies were formed, but all in the same arrangement.

Bethsaida. (45.) (Marg.) Bethsaida was near the place where Jesus and the disciples then were, and *probably* to the east of the sea of Tiberias: but learned men are not agreed in respect of its situation. (Luke ix. 10.)

Hardened. (52.) Had the disciples duly reflected on the miracle that Christ had wrought in feeding the multitude, they would not have been so exceedingly amazed at his walking on the waves of the sea, and causing the tempest to subside. But their minds were in part hardened, through remaining unbelief and carnal prejudices; so that they did not make a proper improvement of the miracles

which they beheld, nor durably retain the impressions, which at first were made on them. Thus they speedily forgot their conviction of the divine power of their Lord, and this occasioned their astonishment at every renewed display of it.

Touch. (56.) Perhaps the report of the woman, that had been cured by touching the fringe of Christ's garment, encouraged these afflicted persons to apply to him, by his permission, in this manner.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-13.

We are taught, by our Lord's example, to renew our endeavours for the spiritual good even of those, who have already treated us with cruelty or contempt, and where danger and contumely may again be expected; and we are reminded, that industry in the meanest and most laborious honest calling, is far more honourable and beneficial than indolence or dissipation, especially in youth. They therefore who are placed in such situations, should cheerfully go on with their employments; and, if God have work of another kind for them, it will be no hinderance to their future usefulness. Worldly men indeed despise the most wise and excellent persons, because of their mean extraction, low occupations, or poor relations; or on account of their own previous familiarity with them and superiority over them: for unbelief will always find some objection

CHAP. VII.

The Pharisees find fault with the disciples for eating with unwashed hands; and Jesus shows, that their traditions make void the law of God, 1—13. He teaches

the source and nature of defilement, 14—23; heals the daughter of a Syrophenician woman, 24—30; and a man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, 31—37.

against the truth, and those who are zealous for it: but whilst their unreasonable prejudices preclude them from the benefit, the servants of God will find others disposed to profit by them. Indeed, the inhabitants of villages are often more ready to welcome the Gospel, than those of flourishing and populous cities; if therefore we fail of meeting acceptance in the latter, we should be satisfied to go and teach poor peasants and cottagers the way of salvation. —The Lord Jesus, the Fountain of all authority in his Church, dispenseth to every man as he pleaseth: and he will surely qualify and assist those whom he commissions to preach his Gospel. Where the truth hath hitherto been but little known, it is very desirable that ministers should go forth at least by two and two; that they may have the comfort and benefit of each other's society, counsel, and prayers. Whilst faithful preachers desire and design to be a blessing to the people, and being content with food and raiment, however mean and scanty, seek "not their's, but them," they prove the occasion of deeper condemnation to those, who constrain them to shake off the dust of their feet for a testimony against them, by refusing to hear and receive their message. How heinous a sin must unbelief be in all who have the adequate means of conviction; seeing a righteous God will render their final doom more intolerable than that of Sodom and Gomorrah! The servants of Christ must go forth in his name, every where preaching that men should "repent, and turn to God," and do works meet for repentance;" and enforcing their exhortations by the terrors of the law, and by the encouraging truths and promises of the Gospel. In this way they may hope to turn many from the power of darkness unto God, and be the instruments of healing their souls by the unction of the Holy Spirit.

V. 14—29.

When the truths and honour of Christ are spread abroad by the successful labours of his ministers, men will make their observations, or conjectures, respecting them, according to their different humours or prejudices: and then the secret remorse and horror of conscience, which wicked men experience, will often be brought to light. No hardness of heart or worldly grandeur can preserve the enemies of God from terrors and anxieties. They are seldom wholly exempt from convictions of their own guilt, and they are often unable to keep out the dread of divine vengeance. They may imprison or murder their outward reprovers, but this only increases the clamour of their inward monitor: and any person, who understands and believes the Bible, may predict the consequence of a man's determining to mount, if possible, the summit of prosperity, by whatever means and at any rate; for if he succeed, he will find his desired eminence a most turbulent, anxious, and perilous situation; and unless he have the wisdom and grace to descend speedily into the valley of humilia-

tion, he will soon be cast down into the depths of hell. We may see the reason, why men cannot receive the message of God's ministers, and why they treat them with contempt and enmity: they feel their example and doctrine to be a reproach; their pride is affronted, their consciences are disquieted, and their darling indulgences opposed; and thus they, and their associates in iniquity, have an irreconcilable quarrel against the very persons, whom they cannot but stand in awe of, as just and holy men, whom they have often heard with apparent satisfaction, and at whose instance they have done many things. But the frame of men's minds is very different, when they are hearing the word of God, as delivered by a heart-searching awakening preacher, than it is at those times, when they are celebrating luxurious and joyous feasts, indulging their appetites, surrounded with flatterers, and carousing with dissipated companions. Such are Satan's opportunities: he waits for them, in order to take his advantage, to push men forward into those enormities, from which they were restrained by remaining scruples in their more sober hours. Hence it hath often been known, that the most atrocious murders have been hastily committed, as it were, to grace a riotous banquet, or to gratify some worthless individual, who had contributed to the luxury or conviviality of the occasion! Thus the great murderer of men carries his point, and employs them in the infatuated work of destroying each others lives and souls. If the history of persecutions and martyrs could be written under the guidance of inspiration, it would be found, that thousands of the most valuable lives had fallen a sacrifice to the revenge of some ambitious and licentious Herodias; or of some vile wretch, whose pride had been affronted, and whose success in wickedness had been impeded or endangered by their faithful reproofs. Yet even they, who are instigated by such prompters, often pretend that their conscience and honour are concerned; and devise to connect oaths, engagements, and regard to friends, to the public peace, or the good of the Church, with the gratification of their iniquitous cruelty and revenge! They can, however, do the faithful servants of God no real harm: he will graciously vouchsafe them another kind of recompense than they received from men; and avenge their cause on those, who repaid their friendly warnings with indignity and cruelty. But what will be the doom of those, who have instigated their own children and nearest relatives to the most atrocious crimes, in order to gratify their own vile passions!

V. 30—56.

Whilst the enemies of God are triumphing in their short-lived success, and his friends are mourning over the loss of those that have entered into their rest, he will send forth other ministers to spread his Gospel, and will protect them in their work till it be finished. Every minister must give an account of himself to Christ at last: and is

a iii 22 Matt.
x 1 Luke v.
17 xl 53, 54.

THEN came together unto him ^a the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.

^b Or common
Acts x 14, 15.
22.
12. D. m. 12. 4. 5.
Mt. x 31-35.
K. x 1-25.

2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with ^c defiled, (that is to say, with unwashed) hands, ^b they found fault.

3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews,

except they wash *their hands* ^d *†* oft, eat ^e not. ^f holding ^g the tradition ^h of the elders.

4 And *when they come from the market,* ⁱ except they wash they eat not. And ^j many other things there be which they have received to hold, *as the washing of cups, and ^k pots, and brazen vessels, and of ^l tables.*

Jan. vi 6 1 John 1 7 — 1 Cr. S. *Graves*; about a poⁿ and a half — 1 Or. *beds*.

behooves us now to do it continually before his throne of grace, both concerning ^a all we have done, and all that ^b we have taught." Thus we shall have the comfort of his gracious acceptance of that which hath been right, and obtain his blessing upon our labours: and thus we may seek his merciful forgiveness of what hath been wrong, pray that the effects of it may be counteracted, and learn to profit even by our own mistakes and offences. Our blessed Lord, knowing our frailty, will allow and provide for us seasons of relaxation after fatiguing exertions in his service; that we may be recruited for our work, recollect ourselves respecting the state of our own souls, and receive further instructions from him concerning our future conduct: and if he, by sickness, or any other providential hinderance, lay us aside for a season from our work, we should not think the time wasted, but listen more attentively to his teaching, and seek to profit by the visitation. They who know the preciousness of Christ and his salvation, and have learned where he may be found, will break through all hinderances, that they may apply to him; nor will he refuse instruction or assistance to those, who deviate from ordinary rules in their earnestness to obtain the blessings of salvation. He has tender compassion for them who are as sheep not having a shepherd; and such as wait on him take the best method of obtaining all things needful for soul and body: for as he died on the cross, that he might feed our perishing souls with the bread of life, he will not fail in his providence to give us food for our bodies also. Whilst we therefore cheerfully and thankfully depend on his power and grace, let us copy his example, in being accessible at all times to those who want our help, in compassionating the temporal afflictions of our neighbours, as well as the lost condition of their souls; and in being always ready to distribute, and glad to communicate to their necessities. In order to this, we should be frugal in our expenses, that we may have the more to expend in liberality; and we may trust in the Lord to make up by his blessing whatever is necessary to our state in life. We should also learn to connect piety and charity together; and to delight alternately in communion with God, and in doing good to men; and should we meet with storms and difficulties in the path of duty, we may by faith behold our heavenly Advocate pleading our cause, and ready to come to our help, as it were walking upon the waves, and silencing the tempest as he pleases; and allaying our terrors, by saying, "Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid." Did we duly regard even our own experience of his power, truth, and love, we should not be so much alarmed at renewed difficulties, or at formidable appearances: our expectations would then be raised higher; and though our amazement at his renewed interpositions

might be less, our admiring gratitude and praise would be greater, than they now are. But we lose much of our comfort in the watchful care of our Lord, by remaining unbelief, forgetfulness, and hardness of heart. Did we value the health of their souls as they do that of their bodies, and had they strong faith in the Redeemer's power and grace; they would flock to him from villages and cities, sparing neither trouble nor inconvenience, and beseeching him, that they might be enabled in faith to touch even the hem of his garment; for certainly, they who thus apply to him will be made whole of their most inveterate diseases. And here again let us learn to be doing good wherever we go, and to seek the salvation of Christ, for others as well as for ourselves.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII. V. 1. "None do more resist the wisdom of God, than they that should be wisest; and that upon zeal for their own traditions: for men do not please themselves more in any thing than in superstition, to which hypocrisy is a constant companion." (*Beza*). It is probable the chosen persons of the Pharisees and scribes had been deputed to watch the conduct and discourses of Jesus, in order to find matter of accusation against him; and had come from Jerusalem for this purpose, though they did not avow it. (*Notes*, Matt. xv. 1—20.)

V. 3, 4. This evangelist gives a more particular account of these traditional washings than Matthew did. The Pharisees and other Jews used not to eat, except they washed their hands *oft, or diligently*, "with their fist," or "to the wrist," or "to the elbow;" (some understand it one way, and some another,) being afraid of having inadvertently contracted defilement. When they returned from the markets, or places of public resort, they would not eat, except they washed, or were *baptized*, (as it is in the original;) and they had received, and very tenaciously held, many such things, as the *washings, or baptisms*, of cups, pots, and even of their *tables, or rather beds*, the couches on which they reclined to meat. If we suppose that they *always* bathed the whole body, after they returned from the markets, which is not very probable; yet we cannot conceive that they plunged their couches in water also. As the Pharisees only blamed Christ's disciples for eating with unwashed hands, so it seems undeniable that, by the words *baptize, and baptisms*, a partial application of water was intended in this, as well as in several other places. (*Note*, Luke xi. 37—39.) "A man shall wash his hands in the morning, so that it shall suffice him for the day; and he shall not need to wash his hands *as oft* as he eats; which holds, if he do not avert his mind

5 Then the Pharisees and Scribes asked him, Why ^a walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

6 He answered and said unto them, ^b Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

7 Howbeit, ^c in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines ^d the commandments of men.

8 For, laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold ^e the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

9 And he said unto them, ^f Full well ye ^g reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

10 For Moses said, ^h Honour thy father and thy mother; and, ⁱ Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death.

11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, ^j *R is Corban*, that is to say, A gift, by whatsoever thy mightest be profited by me; ^k *he shall be free*.

12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

13 Making ^l the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye

have delivered; and many ^m such like things do ye.

14 ¶ And ⁿ when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Harken unto me every one of you, and understand:

15 There is ^o nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

16 If ^p any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

17 And ^q when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

18 And he saith unto them, ^r Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him:

19 Because ^s it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

20 And he said, ^t That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

21 For from within, ^u out of the heart of men, proceed ^v evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, ^w an evil eye, blasphemy, ^x pride, ^y foolishness:

23 All these evil things, these defile the man: but eating and drinking with unwashen hands defileth not the man, but the heart is defiled.

“things well,” (37;) that is, most excellently and admirably.

V. 10. *Die the death.* Without the least hope of escaping.

V. 11. *Corban* is a Hebrew word, very frequently used in the Old Testament for different kinds of sacred oblations. Some have supposed, that this might be especially meant of a rash vow made by a man in a passion, that he would do nothing more for his parents, but would rather give all he could spare to the treasury; which would be equivalent to cursing them: yet the blind Pharisees had determined that such a vow ought to be religiously observed!

V. 13. *Many such, &c.* Vows take place even in things commanded by the law, as well as in things indifferent: and then any one is so bound by them, that he cannot without great sin do that which is commanded. (Jewish Canon in Pocock.)

V. 21. Evil thoughts, or reasonings, spring from the corrupt state of the heart. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 22. *Foolishness.* Some understand this of vain-glorious boasting; but perhaps every inordinate and ungovernable inclination, which leads men to act foolishly and wickedly, may be meant. Even excess in eating and

ii 16-19 Acts
iv 21, 22 Rom.
iv 12, 2 Thes
iii 6, 11

Is xlii. 13.
Matt xv 7-9
G Matt xxvii 25
L Luke xxi 39-44

He xxviii 31
Hos vii 2, 3
John v. 42 vii 41, 42, 54, 55, xv. 22, 23, 31, 32
Tit 1 16 Jam ii 14-17

J Sam xii. 21
Mat. iii 14
Matt vi 7 xv. 9
1 Cor xv 14
2 Tim ii 16
Jam 1 26 ii 20

Col ii 23
Tim. i 1-3
Rev xiv 11, 12
xxii 18
1 3, 4

2 Kings xvi 10
-16, 18. xxvii
5. xix 13 Jer.
xvii 17 Dan
vii 25, xi 36
Matt xv. 3-6
2 Thes ii 4

Ps cxxxix
Rom iii 31 Gal
ii 21

n x. 13. Ex. xx.
12 Deut. v 16.
o 23 xxi 17.
Le. xxi 3 Deut.
xxvii 16 Prov.
xx. 17 Matt xv. 17

p Matt xv. 5.
xxviii 18 1 Tim.
v 4, 6

q 9. Is xlii. 20.
Jer. vi. 8, 9.
Hos. vii. 12
Matt. v 17-20
xv. 6 Tit 1 14

another way; (that is, go abroad, or meddle with business, or go to the market, &c.) but if he do so, he is bound to wash his hands as oft as there is need of washing. (Maimonides in Hammond.) This washing is called being baptized; not the hands being baptized, but the persons being baptized. It is intimated here, that these observances were not peculiar to the Pharisees, but general among the Jews, through the influence of the scribes and elders: and this shows the conduct of our Lord and his disciples, in this protest, the more remarkable. The rites of the ceremonial law they strictly observed; and they paid the required tribute, lest they should give offence: but as the traditions of the elders undermined the authority of the divine law, our Lord himself openly refused to comply with them, and taught his disciples to do the same.

V. 8. *Cups or brazen vessels:* earthen vessels, if in any way they contracted defilement, were broken.

V. 9. *Full-well, &c.* Do ye not act in a most becoming and pious manner, by thus preferring human traditions to God's commandments? The guilt and folly of the Scribes and Pharisees are exposed by an ironical commendation. The same word is used before, "Well hath Esaias," &c. (6;) and afterwards, "He hath done all

23 All these evil things come from^a within, and^b defile the man.

24 ¶ And¹ from thence he arose, and went into the borders of^k Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house,¹ and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid,

25 For^m a certain woman,ⁿ whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and^o fell at his feet;

26 (The woman was a^{*} Greek,^p a Syro-phenician by nation;) and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

27 But Jesus said unto her,^q Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.

28 And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs' under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

29 And he said unto her,^r For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

30 And when^t she was come to her

house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

31 ¶ And again, departing^u from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of^v Decapolis.

32 And they^w bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

33 And^x he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue;

34 And^y looking up to heaven,^z he sighed, and saith unto him, ° Ephphatha, that is, ° Be opened.

35 And^a straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

36 And^b he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it;

37 And^c were beyond measure astonished, saying, ° He hath done all things well: ° he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

drinking, by which indeed a man is defiled with what goeth in at his mouth, must be considered as springing from the sensuality of his heart, and its immoderate hankering after animal indulgence.

V. 24—30. (Notes, Matt. xv. 21—28) Syro-phenician. That part of Phenicia, which the Syrians had conquered, was called Syro-phenicia.

Yes, Lord. The same word is rendered in Matthew, "Truth, Lord." It is sometimes a form of assenting, and sometimes of entreating. (Philem. 20. Gr.) 'That which the proud do reject, that do the humble, as it were, bring out.' (Beza.)

V. 31—36. This miracle is no where else recorded. The dispossessed demoniac had declared through the region of Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him. (v. 20.) Some persons long before indeed attended on Christ from that country, (Matt. iv. 25:) but it is probable that the man's testimony had considerable effect in disposing the people to regard Jesus with greater reverence and expectation, when he went into those parts. They immediately therefore brought unto him a man that was deaf, and could scarcely speak, entreating him to cure him, by laying his hand upon him, as he frequently did: (Marg. Ref.) but he was pleased on this occasion to vary his method, to show that he was not confined to any. He therefore took the man aside, put his fingers in his ears, and, spitting, touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, to denote that he acted by a divine power, in perfect union with God the Father, and sighing, as sympathizing with the man in his misery, and in a view of the calamities to

which men are exposed by sin, he said, with authority, "Be opened;" and an immediate cure ensued, to the exceedingly great astonishment of the people, who acknowledged the power, goodness, and excellency of his works, in this and other instances. And though he charged them as usual not to publish the miracle, this only caused them the more to speak of it; as they deemed it improper that his wonderful works should be concealed, through his cure in avoiding all ostentation. Ephphatha is Syriac, but it varies very little from the Hebrew word of the same signification.

V. 37. This unreserved commendation implied that Jesus was the predicted Messiah, and that the Pharisees and Scribes were highly criminal in opposing him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—23.

Those clean hands and that pure heart, which Christ requires and bestows, are very different from the external decency, and superstitious forms and appearances of sanctity, which have distinguished proud Pharisees in every age. Their outward purifications and ceremonies can neither purge the conscience from guilt, nor the affections from avarice, ambition, sensuality, or hypocrisy: and if our hearts be purified by faith and grace, we shall not need such human inventions, but "all things will be made clean unto us." Yet formalists find fault with Christ's disciples, for not complying with their supersti-

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q Matt. vii. 6 x
5. 6. xv. 23—28
Luke vii. 6—9
22. Rom. vi. 8
Eph. ii. 12

r To 16: 16 Is
xiv. 22. xlix. 6
Matt. v. 45
Luke vii. 6—9
xv. 30—32. Acts
xi. 17, 18. Rom.
ii. 10. x. 12
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xxv. 2. Matt. v.
v. 45. 1—13
John iii. 8
John iv. 50—52.

u 24. Matt. ix. 29
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CHAP. VIII.

Jesus miraculously feeds the multitudes, 1—10; refuses the Pharisees a sign, 11—13; warns the disciples against their leaven and that of Herod; and reproves them for dullness of understanding, 14—21: gives sight to a blind man at Bethsaida, 22—26; approves Peter's confession, predicts his own sufferings, and rebukes Peter for objecting to them, 27—33; and teaches self-denial and a willingness to suffer for his sake, 34—38.

e Matt. xv. 22.

b. i. 41. v. 19. vi.
34. ix. 22. P.
c. 11. 12. Mic. vi.
19. Matt. ix. 36.
xv. 14. xx. 31.
Luke vii. 13. xv.
30. Heb. ii. 17.
iv. 15.
c. Matt. iv. 2—4.
vi. 32. 33. John
iv. 6—8. 30—34.

IN those days, ^a the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them,

2 I have ^b compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, ^c and have nothing to eat; 3 And if I send them away fasting to

their own houses, ^d they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.

4 And his disciples answered him, ^e From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?

5 And he asked them, ^f How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

6 And he commanded the people ^g to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, ^h and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people.

7 And they had a few small ⁱ fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them.

8 So they did eat, ^k and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets.

9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand; and he sent them away.

V. 24—37.

tions; and pretend his authority for them, in order to run down his cause and persecute his people. But men may be very zealous for various plausible and burdensome observances, and exact in attending to them; yet they may remain strangers to true religion, enemies of Christ, and hypocritical worshippers. This must be the case of those zealots, of every denomination, who “reject the commandments of God,” and the doctrines of the Gospel, that they may keep their own traditions: and all vows or engagements must be antichristian and impious; which allow children to dishonour or neglect their parents; or which authorize men to violate the important and immutable obligations of justice, mercy, and truth. A spiritual understanding of the holy law of God, and of the evil of sin; an acquaintance with the depravity of the human heart, and the defilement which thence flows into the conduct and conversation; and a discernment of the scriptural way of cleansing a guilty conscience and a polluted heart, will effectually wean a man from these human inventions.—The enlightened Christian will seek the grace of the Holy Spirit, to enable him to repress the evil imaginations and affections of his heart: as he is aware that the very “thought of wickedness is sin,” he will endeavour to mortify and purge out the sensual, malicious, unjust, covetous, envious, and ambitious desires of his heart. He will seek deliverance from all enmity and hard thoughts of God; from all ingratitude, selfishness, and inordinate love even of lawful things. He will pray to be cleansed from every inclination that is inconsistent with piety, equity, sincerity, purity, and charity: and he will know, that if he be indeed purified from these, and such like inward evils, that defile the man, he is certainly made partaker of that “holiness, without which no man” “shall see the Lord;” and his grand object will then be, to increase more and more in faith and grace, from day to day.

Whilst proud Pharisees are left with decided disapprobation, the blessed Saviour manifests his compassion and love to humble sinners of the Gentiles; and all, who allow themselves to be unworthy of the crumbs that fall from his table, may confidently call upon him for the food of his beloved children. Still he goes about to every place to seek and save the lost; and neither the obscurity of his ministers, nor the opposition of his enemies, can prevent the discovery of his glory and grace. In like manner it is our business to persevere in doing good, privately, and in an unambitious manner: and our labour of love will not always be hid or misrepresented. When sinners apply to Christ, in behalf of themselves and those that are dear to them, earnestly desiring deliverance by him from the oppression of the devil, they may have their faith and humility tried by delays and frowns, and may be ready to conclude that the blessings are reserved for others, and will not be vouchsafed to them; but patient and humble waiting on Christ, by faith and prayer, will certainly prevail; nor shall any have cause to say, they have sought his face in vain. Thus one after another obtains the blessing, and declares the Saviour's love to others; and they too seek to him, in their trouble and distress. And though we find a great variety in the cases, the reception, and the manner of relief of those who came to him when here below, yet in one way or other they all obtained the help which they sought. Thus it still is, in the grand concerns of our souls: the compassionate Saviour still opens the deaf ear, and looses the stammering tongue: and when he speaks with divine authority, he opens the understanding and the heart to receive instruction, and the lips to show forth his praise. Whilst we then admire the grace and excellency of his character, and the power of his works, let us proclaim to all around us, that, “he hath done all things well; as he” “maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.”

10 And ¹ straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

11 ¶ And the ^m Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, ⁿ seeking of him a sign from heaven, ^o tempting him.

12 And ^p he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, ^q Why doth this generation seek after a sign? Verily I say unto you, ^r There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

13 And ^s he left them, and entering into the ship again, departed to the other side.

14 ¶ Now the disciples ^t had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.

15 And ^u he charged them, saying, ^v Take heed, beware of ^w the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven ^x of Herod.

16 And they ^y reasoned among themselves, saying, ^z It is because we have no bread.

17 And when Jesus ^b knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye because ye have no bread? ^c Perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

18 Matt. xv. 17. xv. 8. 9. Luke xxiv. 25. Heb. v. 11, 12.

18 Having eyes, ^a see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

19 When I brake ^e the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.

20 And when ^f the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.

21 And he said unto them, ^g How is it that ye do not understand?

22 ¶ And he cometh to ^h Bethsaida; and ⁱ they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him ^j to touch him.

23 And he took the blind man ^k by the hand, and led him ^l out of the town; and when he had ^m spit out of his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw aught.

24 And he looked up, and said, ⁿ I see men, as trees, walking.

25 After that, he put ^o his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, ^p and saw every man clearly.

26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, ^q Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII. V. 1—10. (Notes, Matt. xv. 32—

33. Marg. Ref.) Faint, &c. (3.) 'Had there not been such danger, Christ had not wrought this miracle; that the people might not follow him for loaves; and having done this, he straightway leaves them, that he might avoid their attempts to make him a king.' (Theophylact.)—Bread. (4.) 'This, among the Hebrews, frequently signifies all kinds of food; but here it must be understood literally; as if the disciples had said, Not even bread alone, or any kind of food, can in this place be procured, to satisfy so large a multitude.' (Beza.)

V. 11—13. (Notes, Matt. xvi. 1—4; and on Scriptures referred to in the margin.) Sighed deeply. (12.) This was a strong expression of our Lord's holy indignation against the obstinate unbelief and hypocrisy of the Pharisees; as well as of his compassionate concern at seeing them in this manner bent on their own destruction, and deceiving the souls of the people. He seems to have left Dalmanutha, without either preaching, or working miracles; for it is probable that the people in general were greatly prejudiced against him by their false teachers.

V. 14—16. (Notes, Matt. xvi. 5—12.) 'We must especially beware of them, who corrupt the word of God, of what degree soever they be, either in the Church or the community. They who have their minds fixed on earthly things are utterly blind as to heavenly things;

though they be never so plainly set forth to them.' (Beza.)

V. 17—21. Even the disciples were in some degree infected with the same carnal prejudices, which had entirely occupied the minds of the Pharisees and other Jews. Our Lord therefore "rebuked them sharply, that they might be sound in the faith." He intimated, that their dulness of understanding was marvellous and inexcusable, when all their advantages were considered. Were their hearts also so hard, and their eyes so blind, that his continued instructions could not convince them that he purposed to raise their minds to spiritual and eternal objects, and guard them against false doctrines; and not to amuse them with minute outward distinctions and peculiarities? And could they be so unbelieving, as to doubt his power to feed them, after the astonishing miracles which they had so lately witnessed?

V. 22—26. St. Mark alone records this miracle. This blind man was conducted by his friends to Jesus, when he was come to Bethsaida; yet he seems not to have been an inhabitant of that city. Our Lord, however, was pleased to restore him to sight in an unusual method: perhaps in order gradually to increase his faith and to raise his expectation; but it also illustrated the manner in which he often enlightens the souls of men. He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; not only that he might work the miracle in a more

CHAP. IX.

The transfiguration of Christ, 1—10. He shows that John Baptist was "Elias who was to come," 11—13. He casts out a dumb and deaf spirit, having rebuked the company and the disciples for their unbelief, 14—29. He foretells his own death and resurrection, 30—32: reproves

the ambition of the disciples, 33—37: forbids them to hinder one who cast out devils in his name, though he followed not with them, 38—41: shows the guilt of offending weak believers, 42: and warns his hearers to part with all occasions of sin; showing the awful doom of the wicked, especially of apostates, 43—48.

V. 33. (Note, Matt. x. 32, 33.) That the fear of imprisonment or death should terrify others, as it did Peter, to deny Christ, could not be at all incredible; but that any should be *ashamed* of him, whom all angels worship, and in whom all the inhabitants of heaven glory, must before the event have appeared inconceivable; except to those who have a deep knowledge of human nature, and experience of the deceitfulness of their own hearts. Yet, perhaps, there is no sin, to which every convert to true Christianity is more powerfully tempted; and no temptation, which induces such numbers to act habitually against the light and conviction of their own consciences, in order to escape the reproach and scorn of men, and often of their inferiors, dependents, and domestics! The propriety of this solemn warning is therefore manifest to all, who properly consider what passes under their own observation, even in countries professing Christianity. (*Marg. Ref.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—21.

Our compassionate Lord sometimes requires his followers to endure hardship in attending on him; but he relieves them before they faint under their burdens: and we should copy him, in noticing the difficulties and wants of those around us. But his love as much excels ours, as his power and all-sufficiency exceed our weakness and indigence. He will feed his hungry disciples with suitable provision, but the delicate have no reason to expect luxuries; for these are often lavished on the servants of another master. Yet many professed Christians excuse themselves, on account of their poverty, from relieving the distressed, who would think it hard to dine with Jesus and his company on those provisions which he miraculously supplied! The lively Christian, however, whilst his soul is feasted with the hidden manna, will eat his mean morsel with thankfulness, and the blessing of God upon it, and with a better relish, than unthankful worldly men do their royal dainties. Alas, what cause have we to groan and sigh because of those around us, who destroy themselves and others by their perverse and obstinate unbelief, and enmity to the Gospel! But we have great cause to be humbled and thankful on our own account; for the Lord hath continual reason to reprove us also, for our remaining distrust and carnal apprehensions. How is it, that we no more see the glory of his truths, the privileges of his kingdom, the security of his word, the spirituality of his precepts? How is it, that we so often mistake his meaning, disregard his warnings, and distrust

his providence? Alas, these things arise from the remains of that same leaven, which wholly prevails in the hearts of unbelievers. Let us then watch against it; and let us beseech the Lord to remove from us all hardness of heart, and blindness of understanding, that we may perceive, hear, and remember his truths and precepts, and be thankful for all his multiplied kindnesses to us.

V. 22—38.

The Lord commonly illuminates our minds gradually; and he works by means, which are often no more than external signs of his efficacious operation: thus he sometimes takes a poor blind sinner aside from the multitude, gradually removes the darkness from his understanding, and leads him to some indistinct views of spiritual things. This is his own work, and he will perfect it, and we should wait his time. Let then all who desire this blessing seek to Christ for it, the Light of the world, in the use of the means appointed by him, and they shall not be disappointed. But while the blind see out of obscurity, the proud, who reject his teaching, are given up to darkness and delusion; and even the means of instruction are in righteous judgment withdrawn from them. The Lord will interrogate his followers on their proficiency, and his real disciples are distinguished by their honourable apprehensions of him, and large expectations from him. He will approve of what we are enabled to speak or do in a proper manner: but we continually need to be taught further lessons concerning his sufferings for us, and the self-denial that he requires from us. Our carnal minds are very averse to these humiliating and spiritual lessons: and even where there is some true knowledge, faith, and grace, there may be, and often is, much ignorance, error, and carnality. As our Lord so sharply reproved Peter for objecting to his sufferings, which the glory of God and the salvation of his people required, so we should remember, that they, who would set us against self-denial, for the honour of our Lord, and the good of others, "savour the things that are of men, and not those that are of God." All people should therefore be called to observe, that they, who would go after Christ to heaven, must "deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him;" and that they only are in the way of eternal happiness, who are willing to venture all, even their very lives, rather than deny Christ, or be ashamed of him in this evil world. Did we duly consider the worth and danger of our precious souls, for which no ransom could be found but the blood of Emmanuel, we should count the whole world contemptible, if the gain of

a Matt. xvi. 28.

b Luke ii. 36.

c John i. 51, 52.

d Luke x. 1.

e Luke x. 2.

f Luke x. 21.

g Luke x. 22.

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cq Luke x. 110.

AND he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, * That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not ^b taste of death, till they have seen ^c the kingdom of God come with power.

2 ¶ And ^d after six days, Jesus taketh with him ^e Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into ^f an high mountain apart by themselves; and he was ^g transfigured before them.

3 And ^h his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as ⁱ no fuller on earth can white them.

4 And there ^j appeared unto them ^k Elias with ^l Moses; and they were talking with Jesus.

5 And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, ^m it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

6 For ⁿ he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

7 And there was ^o a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out

of the cloud, saying, * This is my beloved Son; ^p hear him.

8 And ^q suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, ^r he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, ^s till the Son of man were risen from the dead.

10 And ^t they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another, ^u what the rising from the dead should mean.

11 ¶ And they asked him, saying, ^v Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?

12 And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and ^w restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that ^x he must suffer many things, and be ^y set at nought.

13 But I say unto you, that ^z Elias is indeed come, ^{aa} and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

it endangered our souls; and the loss of life our greatest gain, if laid down for the sake of Christ and the Gospel. May we then continually think of the season, when he will come in the glory of the Father with his holy angels, and estimate every earthly object, as we shall do on that important day!

NOTES.

CHAP. IX. V. 1. (Note, Matt. xvi. 28.) * This chiefly refers to the providential appearance of Christ for the destruction of Jerusalem. Our Lord's manner of speaking intimates, that most of the company should be dead before the event referred to: yet his ascension happened in a few months after. (Dodgridge.) Some interpret the passage of the successful preaching of the Gospel after Christ's ascension, and the powerful establishment of his kingdom by means of it: but the reason assigned in this quotation seems conclusive for interpreting it of his glorious appearance, in his providence, to remove the great hindrance to the full settlement of the Christian Church, by destroying Jerusalem, and terminating the Jewish dispensation.

V. 2—10. (Notes, Matt. xvii. 1—13. Marg. Ref.) The apostles argued with each other concerning their Lord's meaning, when he said, "Till the Son of man be risen from the dead." Not that they did not believe a future resurrection, or had any peculiar difficulty concerning the common meaning of the words; for they had witnessed some instances of the dead being restored to life:

but they were so prepossessed with prejudices against the Messiah's being cut off by death, and so assured that Jesus was the Messiah, that they supposed some figurative sense must be put on his words; for, as he could not literally die, he could not literally rise again. Nothing has more tended to induce false interpretations of Scripture, than a vain imagination that the literal meaning could not be true, because contrary to some notion, which, though no better than the prejudiced conclusion of a peculiar sect, has been regarded as *certain truth*; and therefore *allegorizing*, (called *spiritual interpretation*.) must be adopted. But the grand wisdom and discernment of an expositor consists, in knowing what ought to be explained literally, and what must be interpreted figuratively. The papists, explaining "This is my body," literally, and some others *allegorizing* the parable or story of the good Samaritan, will show the attentive reader the importance of this remark.

V. 11—13. In answer to their other scruple, how the Son of man could die, he told them also from the Scriptures, how it was foretold that he should suffer many things. (Whitby.) Restore, &c. (12.) That is, bring back numbers from ungodliness to the true worship and service of God; as Elijah had done the Israelites from Baal to JEHOVAH. The concluding verse would be more readily understood, if translated as follows: "Elias is indeed come, as it is written of him; and they have done to him whatsoever they listed." The last clause is evidently inserted as a parenthesis; and in a translation it stands better at the end. It was not foretold that the

Mat. xvii. 14.
sc. Luke ix. 37.

Mat. vi. xli. 28 xlii.

11 Luke x. 53.

54 Heb. xli. 3.

12, 3. Ex xxviii.

20. Mat. xi. Luke

x. 20—12

* Or, many your-

staves

11. Mat. xvii.

15 John iv. 47.

25. Mat. xli.

* Or, dashed.

26. Mat. xv.

22. Luke ix. 39.

20 John ix. 9.

Ps. cxli. 10. Mat.

xvii. 11. Acts

viii. 54.

28, 29. xi. 23, 2

Kings iv. 23.

21. Mat. xvii.

11. 12. 1. Luke

ix. 40.

Q. xvi. 14. Num.

xix. 11. 22. 27.

xxvii. 13. 14.

Deut. xxxii. 20.

Ps. lxxviii. 6—8.

22. vii. 21—25.

Mat. xvii. 17.

Luke ix. 41.

xxv. 25. John

xi. 37. xv. 12

Heb. iii. 10—12

¶ 14 And ^a when he came to *his* disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and ^b the scribes questioning with them.

15 And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, ^a were greatly amazed, and running to *him*, saluted him.

16 And he asked the scribes, ^b What question ye ^c with them?

17 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, ^a I have brought unto thee my son, which hath ^b a dumb spirit:

18 And whosoever he taketh him, he ^a teareth him; and he ^b foameth, and ^c gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away; and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out, ^b and they could not.

19 He answereth him, and saith, ^a O faithless generation! how long shall I be

with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me.

20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway ^a the spirit tare him, and he fell on the ground, and wallowed, foaming.

21 And he asked his father, ^a How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.

22 And oft-times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters to destroy him: but ^a if thou canst do any thing, ^b have compassion on us, and help us.

23 Jesus said unto him, ^a If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said ^a with tears, Lord, I believe; ^b help thou mine unbelief.

Messiah's forerunner would suffer martyrdom; and the scribes and priests did not put him to death: but it is plain, that they were well pleased, when he was thus taken off, and the conduct of the nation to so eminent a servant of God showed what might be expected from them, against the Saviour whom he preceded.

V. 14, 15. (Notes, Matt. xvii. 14—21.) When Christ and the three apostles were come down from the mount, they found the rest of the disciples surrounded with the multitude; for some of the scribes had taken that opportunity of disputing with them, hoping perhaps to perplex them with objections, in the absence of their Master. But when Jesus appeared, the multitude who had been listening to the debate "were greatly amazed," probably by some remains of lustre visible in his countenance, for no other adequate reason of their surprise can be assigned: and running to him, they saluted him, or expressed their cordial joy at seeing him again.

V. 16—24. On our Lord's inquiring of the scribes the subject, about which they questioned his disciples, one of the multitude addressed him in behalf of his son; who, as he stated the case, was possessed with an evil spirit, which deprived him of speech and hearing; and often seized him with violence, dashing him upon the ground, and causing him to foam at the mouth, and gnash with his teeth in a most horrid manner; so that he pined away, as with wasting sickness. It hath often been observed, that *it* is accords with the case of persons afflicted with the epilepsy; and hence some have ventured to assert, that it was no real possession: but does it not better become our ignorance, concerning the real causes of such dreadful maladies, to allow, that at least the symptoms are aggravated by diabolical agency, than to suppose, that Christ, by word and deed, gave the most explicit sanction to a vulgar error, and taught men to ascribe effects to the malice and power of apostate spirits, which they had no agency in produc-

ing? Such irreverence to the word of God, and to the Redeemer's sacred character, is generally the fruit of pride and determined infidelity, in which Satan has far more influence, than these men are willing in any thing to allow him. In this calamity, the afflicted father had applied to the apostles to cast out the evil spirit, and they had tried, but without success: and it is probable, that their failure in this instance gave the scribes an occasion of questioning them concerning Jesus, and endeavouring to show that he was not the Messiah, or even a true prophet. Perhaps this conversation led the father also to conclude, that Jesus himself was not able to relieve his son. Our Lord therefore answered *him*, yet with reference to the scribes, the multitude, and even to the disciples, who in different degrees were chargeable with very criminal unbelief; and he reproved them as a *faithless* generation, because they had not more enlarged apprehensions of his power and authority; notwithstanding all the miracles which he had wrought among them: and he inquired how long he was to be with them, to display his glory? and how long he must bear with their perverseness and incredulity, before they would be convinced that he was the Son of God, and that nothing was impossible to his omnipotence? This is the evident meaning of the interrogations, as they stand here connected. He then ordered the demoniac to be brought; upon which the evil spirit exerted his utmost malice and power, as if he would set Christ at defiance; and dashed the young man on the ground, tearing him, and constraining him to wallow or roll upon the earth, and foam in a dreadful manner. With this spectacle before his eyes, our Lord inquired, how long the youth had been thus afflicted? This question was probably intended to show the inveteracy of the case, to put the man's faith to a sharp trial, and eventually to illustrate the greatness of his own power. The father accordingly answered, that he had been so tormented from his

25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, ^a he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, ^b *Thou dumb and deaf spirit, ^c I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him.*

26 And the spirit ^a cried and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, *He is dead.*

27 But Jesus ^a took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and he arose.

28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples ^a asked him privately, *Why could not we cast him out?*

29 And he said unto them, ^a *This kind can come forth by nothing but ^b by prayer and ^c fasting.*

30 ¶ And they departed thence, and passed ^a through Galilee: ^b and he would not that any man should know *it*.

31 For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, ^a *The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill*

him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.

32 But ^a they understood not that saying, and ^b were afraid to ask him.

33 ¶ And ^a he came to Capernaum: and being in the house, he asked them, *What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?*

34 But they held their peace: for by the way ^a they had disputed among themselves who *should* be the greatest.

35 And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, ^a *If any man desire to be first, ^b the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.*

36 And ^a he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them,

37 Whosoever shall ^a receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall ^b receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

childhood: and though he had hitherto been marvellously preserved, yet he had often been cast by the evil spirit into the fire, and into the water, apparently with the purpose of destroying him. So that the case had baffled every attempt hitherto made for his relief: but if Jesus *could* do any thing, he entreated him to have compassion on them, and exert his extraordinary power in their behalf. Our Lord then assured him, that in case "he could believe," and steadfastly expect help from his power, the deliverance would certainly follow: seeing all things were possible to him that believed. The event being thus suspended on the father's faith, so that the son could not fail of a cure except through his default, the former, feeling a vehement struggle in his mind between faith and unbelief, and fearing lest he should throw an impediment in the way, immediately cried out with great earnestness, and with a flow of tears, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." He could scarcely believe that Jesus could cast out this powerful and obstinate evil spirit; and yet he concluded, that he could enable him *to believe*, and inwardly assist him against unbelief! In effect he said, "Lord, I do believe, and expect help from thee alone; but I am not able to exclude all doubting about it: but do thou first help me against my unbelief, and then deliver my afflicted child from his deplorable calamity." Where do we ever read of such an address to any prophet or apostle? And who does not perceive that such a request must have been highly reprehensible, if made to any mere man or creature?

V. 25—27. By this time the multitude began to assemble, that they might witness the event; and our Lord was therefore pleased to rebuke the unclean spirit, and to charge him to come out of the young man, and to enter no more into him. This command the demon was unable to

resist; but it filled him with rancour and torment, so that crying out in a dreadful manner, he grievously tore the youth before he left him; insomuch that the spectators supposed him to be dead: but when Jesus took him by the hand, he arose, and was found to be perfectly recovered.

V. 28, 29. (Note, Matt. xvii. 19—21.)

V. 30—32. Our Lord chose at this time to be retired, that he might with the more freedom converse with his disciples about his approaching sufferings, and the event of them. But though no words could be more explicit than those which he made use of, yet they were so blinded by prejudice, that they could not understand him; and they were ashamed of their ignorance, and afraid to ask him what he meant, lest he should reprove them. (Note, 2—10. Marg. Ref.) "Christ, indeed, with great diligence," warns us, that we may not be disconcerted by unexpected calamities; but the inattentive dullness of men is incredible." (Beza.)

V. 33—37. (Notes, Matt. xviii. 1—9.) *The house.* Probably that of Andrew and Peter. (34.) "The thing" itself shows, that the apostles were thinking of an earthly kingdom, which they dreamed was about to follow: and this prevented them from understanding what Christ spake concerning his death and resurrection; their minds being pre-occupied with that imagination. "If there was to be any *primacy* among the apostles, why was Christ on this occasion silent respecting it? Or, if he had, in the hearing of the others, conferred it on Peter, what occasion would there have been for the apostles to dispute about it?" (Beza.) *Servant, &c.* (35.) "The precedence among my disciples, all that they are capable of, that of being governors of the Church, brings no advantage to him that has it, but to be more the servant of other men; more work

33 ¶ And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbid him, because he followeth not us.

39 But Jesus said, ^a Forbid him not: for ^b there is no man shall do a miracle in my name, that can ^c lightly speak evil of me.

40 For ^b he that is not against us, is on our part.

41 For ^a whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, ^b because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, He shall not lose his reward.

42 And whosoever shall ^a offend one of these little ones that believe in me, ^b it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

43 And ⁱ if thy hand ^{*} offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life ^k maimed, than having two hands to

go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched;

44 Where ⁱ their worm dieth not, and ^m the fire is not quenched.

45 And if ^a thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter hall into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched;

46 Where ^a their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

47 And if ^a thine eye [†] offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire;

48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

49 For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

50 Salt ^a is good: but if the salt have lost his saltiness, wherewith will ye season it? ^a Have salt in yourselves, [†] and have peace one with another.

^a and business being the only advantage of that precedence, which shall befall you and your successors.' (Hammond.) If this were clearly the case, or generally believed, the candidates for the distinction of being successors to the apostles would be considerably diminished.

V. 33—40. (Marg. Ref.) Our Lord's declaration, in the preceding verse, reminded John of what he and his brethren had done on a former occasion, and which he now suspected to have been blameable. They had met with a person, who was enabled to cast out devils in the name of Jesus: but as he did not stately follow with them, and was not regularly sent forth, as the apostles and seventy disciples had been, they forbid him to proceed. This was the result of wrong apprehensions and remaining self-confidence. Had not Christ secretly aided the man, he could not have succeeded in his attempt to cast out devils in his name: (Acts xix. 13—17.) it was therefore wrong to prohibit him, especially without so much as asking their Lord's advice. Our Lord warned them not to forbid any one on that account; as it was not likely that he who wrought undeniable miracles in his name, would easily be induced to disparage and vilify him, or his cause; and all, who were not engaged against them, were, in the present circumstances, to be considered as on their part. —Working miracles in the name of Christ did not indeed prove any man to be a true believer: but in the contest between the kingdom of God, and that of Satan, it showed, that in this instance a man fought under the banner of Christ, and against his enemies. 'God, the author of the ordinary vocation, acts in an extraordinary manner, whenever he pleases; but the extraordinary vocation must be tried by the doctrine and the effects.' (Beza.)

V. 41, 42. Instead of prohibiting those who aided in promoting the common cause, our Lord declared that he would certainly recompense every one, who gave his disciples so much as a cup of water, because they belonged to him, the promised Messiah: on the contrary, whosoever injured, grieved, or stumbled the least of his disciples, would commit so grievous a crime, and be in danger of so great a punishment, that the most terrible death would be a much lighter evil, than that to which he would expose himself. "Because ye belong to Christ." These words explain what the phrase, "in the name of a disciple," in Matthew signifies. (Beza.) (Note, Matt. x. 40—42.)

V. 43—50. (Notes, &c. Matt. v. 13, 29, 30, xviii. 7—9.) These solemn warnings, as here introduced, seem especially to relate to the ambition and carnal expectations of the apostles, which led them into so many mistakes in judgment and practice. All such evil propensities must be mortified and cut off, in order to their entering into life, however painful the operation might be. The expressions are here more strong and varied, than in any of the parallel passages. The hand, the foot, and the eye, are separately mentioned, as illustrative of the supposed value of the sacrifices to be made, and of the resolution, self-denial, and wisdom, required, in order to make them. It is repeatedly said, "Their worm never dieth," as well as that "the fire is never quenched." Doubtless, remorse of conscience and keen self-reflection constitute this never dying worm: so that the expression is alike contrary to the ideas of annihilation, and of final restitution to happiness; for on either of these suppositions, their worm would die, and their torturing consciences would cease. And as the fire is doubtless at least an emblem of the wrath of God, its unquenchableness must denote, that his justice will never

CHAP. X.

Jesus teaches in Judea, 1: answers the Pharisees concerning divorces, 2—12: receives and blesses young children, 13—16: instructs and proves the rich young man; shows the danger of affluence; and

makes gracious promises to those who forsake worldly objects for his sake, 17—31: again predicts his own death and resurrection; reproves the ambition of James and John, and the other apostles, 32—45; and gives sight to blind Bartimeus, 46—52.

be satisfied, nor his anger turned away from those who are cast into this fire of hell. The sacrifices under the law were commanded to be salted with salt. This was primarily an emblem of grace, which renders the sanctified soul meet for the enjoyment of its incorruptible inheritance; but it also represented, that "every sacrifice," to the divine justice "would be salted with fire," the very nature of the punishment, or the righteous vengeance of God, will render the heirs of hell incorruptible: so that their misery will be as endless as the happiness of the righteous. "Every wicked man shall be seasoned with fire itself, so as to become unconsumable, and shall endure for ever to be tormented, and therefore may be said to be "salted with fire," in allusion to that property of salt, which is "to preserve things from corruption." (*Whitby.*) In concluding this solemn subject our Lord reminded the disciples, that, as salt, though valuable in itself to season and preserve other bodies, was yet worthless and irrecoverable when it had lost its saltiness, so they would become more vile and hopeless than others, if they were not truly sanctified; for they would be employed in converting and preserving others, and would have none to season them, should they turn aside. It would therefore be incumbent on them to watch over their own hearts, to mortify their lusts, and, laying aside ambition, the fruitful parent of contention, to live at peace with each other. "If the teachers themselves, to whom is committed the administration of the divine word, with which men must be seasoned as with salt, do themselves become insipid," (not savouring of that holy word, in doctrine, spirit, and practice,) "what remaineth, but either that the hearers perish, or that God should send other teachers?" (*Beza.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—13.

Those Christians who shall hereafter live to behold the kingdom of God come with power, and set up in all parts of the world, will enjoy a peculiar satisfaction, with which others have not been favoured: but though we shall taste of death before those happy days arrive, yet we shall possess a still more exalted felicity, if admitted into those regions, where Jesus continually displays far brighter glories than even on the mount of transfiguration. The pleasures of that divine vision must be unspeakably great, seeing the glimpses, which we now behold "as through a glass darkly," sometimes so ravish our minds, that we are ready to cry out, "It is good for us to be here." But we should not expect such consolations to be abiding, in this our state of conflict and probation. We must now learn to hear, believe, love, and obey an unseen Saviour; to walk by faith, and to wait in patient hope. We should

seek conformity to him in holiness, and expect ere long to be with him, and like him in body and soul, where prophets and apostles, yea, angels and arch-angels, vie with each other who shall most honour, adore, and praise his glorious majesty. In this hope we may cheerfully pass through life and death, though we be often under a cloud, and ready to question what the meaning of his words and his appointments can be: and if we consider the way in which Jesus and his servants have passed through this world to heaven, we shall be the less discouraged, should we be called to suffer many things, or be set at nought as the most despicable of mankind, if so be that we may by any means attain unto eternal life. The enemies of Christ will always watch their opportunities of perplexing and disconcerting his disciples: their cavils and objections will create much disquietude to such, as neglect to keep up a continual communion with their Lord; and perverse opponents often attack the unestablished, from a consciousness that they can make no impression on those, who are more confirmed and experienced. But the Lord will interpose to plead for his friends, and to silence the objections of his adversaries; yet many seem zealously to welcome him and his ministers, who do not cordially believe and obey his Gospel.

V. 14—29.

In what varied ways doth Satan prevail to render mankind miserable! Yet his success among those who are favoured with the Gospel, entirely arises from their unbelief: for if they had a clear apprehension of the power and grace of the Saviour, who came to "destroy the works of the devil," they would seek to him and obtain deliverance. —When our children or relatives are made wretched, useless, or mischievous, through the destructive influence of Satan, we should bring them to Christ by faith and prayer, earnestly beseeching him to have compassion upon us, and help us; and we may do this for them, when they are incapable of receiving our instructions, or determined to disregard all our counsels. Ministers and Christians may be applied to on such occasions, and their counsels and prayers may be useful; but our dependence must be rested on Christ alone; and should they conclude the case to be hopeless, we should still persist in expecting help from his almighty arm. But, alas! after all the displays which he hath made of his power and love, and after all his patient teaching of us by his word and our own experience, we are prone to form low expectations from him. Yet the things that to all others are impossible are easy with him. Even in the case of those, who from their earliest years have been peculiarly enslaved by Satan, and have contracted various bad habits and connexions, by means of which they

a. d. l. xix. 1.

b. John x. 40. xi. 6.

c. Re. xii. 9. Jer. xxi. 31. John xviii. 20.

AND he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judea, by the farther side of Jordan; and the people resort unto him again: and, as he was wont, he taught them again.

2 And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.

3 And he answered and said unto

c. Mat. ii. 16. Matt. v. 31. 32. xix. 3. 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11. — c. viii. 11. Matt. xvi. 1. xxii. 29. John viii. 6. 1 Cor. x. 9.

d. vii. 15. Matt. ix. 31. xv. 12. xxiii. 13. Luke. vi. 30. vi. 7. vii. 30. xi. 39. 51. 53. xvi. 14. John vii. 22. 40. x. 47. Matt. xvi. 1.

have, as it were, "often been cast into the fire, and into the water," and have repeatedly been brought to the verge of destruction, we have abundant encouragement to expect help from the Saviour. He hath hitherto bounded the rage of the enemy, and borne with the provocations of the sinner; and he can easily break the power of the former, and glorify himself in the salvation of the latter. Our chief danger, in every thing really good for us, arises from unbelief; "if we can believe, all things are possible to him that believeth:" and as we shall certainly find a difficulty in exercising such an unshaken faith in the power and grace of Christ, on many occasions, so we should apply to him, as the Author and Finisher of our faith, to strengthen us against unbelief, that we may not, through our own default, come short of the blessings which we seek, in behalf of ourselves, or others. Indeed Satan will be very reluctant to be driven out of those, who have long been his slaves; and when he may not deceive or destroy the sinner, he will cause him all the trouble and terror that he can; so that when a man is about to experience a most blessed deliverance, he is often more harassed and distressed than at any other time; and the beginnings of liberty and life resemble the very agonies of death. Ministers would witness, and be the instruments of, more of these remarkable conversions, if they were stronger in faith, and more fervent in prayer, and mortified to earthly pleasures and pursuits: and should we inquire of Jesus, why we have no more success "in turning sinners from the power of Satan unto God?" He would probably answer, "Because of your unbelief;" for this effect cannot be produced, except by fasting and prayer.

V. 30—50.

Whilst the Saviour teaches most plainly those things, that relate to his love and grace, his sufferings and death, his present glory, and future coming to judgment, men in general are so blinded by prejudice, that they understand not his sayings; and, by various hinderances, they are kept from praying for divine illumination. Even disciples are often more ready to dispute with each other, "which shall be the greatest," than with humble simplicity to sit at his feet, and learn the doctrine of the cross, "by which the world must be crucified to them, and they unto the world;" and we all need repeated rebukes, before we are made willing to seek wisdom by becoming as little children, and to aspire after greatness by stooping to be the least of all, and the servants of all. Yet disciples of this character are most dear to their Lord, and will be most honoured by him, as his messengers to mankind: and "whosoever receiveth one of them in Christ's name, receiveth both him, and the Father that sent him."—Pride and bigotry are great hinderances to usefulness: men often think the interests of a party, or the credit of their

order, of more importance than the cause of godliness: they are ready, by an assumed presumptuous authority, to forbid others to cast out devils in the name of Christ, because they follow not with them; and even to grieve when evident good is done, if it be not managed according to their notions of regularity, and by those who are commissioned and sent forth in *their way*. Whereas all, who believe, love, serve, and honour Christ, are of one side: he that is not against us, is on our part: and if sinners are brought to repent, to believe in the Saviour, and to lead sober, righteous, and godly lives, we must perceive that the Lord works by the preacher; and who are we, that we should attempt to silence him? Whilst, therefore, we are encouraged to do good to others for his name's sake, and especially to those that belong to him, assured that such services shall not lose their reward, let us also favour all who appear to be on his side in this evil world, and be glad to show our concurrence with them; and let us dread, even worse than death, any thing that can tend to injure and grieve them, or hinder their usefulness. Instead of acrimony against those, who "follow not with us," let us bend all our severity against our own lusts; not sparing one of them, though it hath been as a hand, a foot, or an eye, unto us; or however painful we may find the mortification of it. Thus we shall be assured of entering into life, and be preserved from the most distant fear of being cast into hell, "where *their* worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." And surely it would be infinitely better to undergo all possible pain, self-denial, and hardship here, and so be for ever happy hereafter, than to enjoy all worldly pleasure for a season, and then to be for ever miserable! If then the difficulty and pain of mortifying every sinful inclination, and subduing bad habits, appear to any man very great; if the worldly advantages to be renounced appear very valuable; let him consider the awful alternative. For eternity is before us: incorruptible in holiness and happiness, or in sin and misery, we must be: either sacrifices to God's justice, to be salted with fire, or living willing sacrifices to his honour, by the sanctification of the Spirit of Christ, and through the redemption of his blood. We have, indeed, the name of Christians; some of us preach, and many profess, the truths of the Gospel; and we are thus the *salt of the earth*. If we then answer to our character, we shall be useful here, and happy for ever; but if we remain destitute of the grace of God, our name, our profession, or our sacred function, will only serve to aggravate our guilt, and increase our condemnation. Let us, then, lay aside every carnal and ambitious project and pursuit: let us "look diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God;" and "let us follow after peace and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

NOTES.

CHAP. X. V. 1. (Marg. Ref.)

g Is vii. 20. Luke
c. 25. 20. John
v. 39. Gal. iv.

b Deut. xxiv. 1.
Ge. 1. 1. 1 Jer.
li. 1 Matt. i.
19. v. 31. 32.
xix. 7.

i Deut. 1. 6.
xxxi. 27. Neh.
ix. 16. 17. 26.
Matt. xix. 8.
Acts. vii. 31.
Hos. iii. 7-10.
k Gen. 1. 1. 2 Pet.

li. 4. 1
i Gen. i. 27. ii.
20-23. v. 2.
Mal. ii. 14-16.
m Gen. ii. 24.
Matt. xix. 5, 6.
Eph. v. 31.

n 1 Cor. vi. 16.
Eph. v. 23.

o Rom. vi. 1-3.
1 Cor. vii. 10-
13.

p Eph. 10. ix. 28.
33.

q Matt. v. 31, 32.
xix. 9. Luke xvi.
18. 1 Cor. vii.
4. 10, 11. Heb.
xiii. 4.

r Matt. ix. 13-
15. Luke xvi.
15, 16.
s 1 Cor. ix. 38. Ex.
9-11. Deut.
xxxi. 12. 13.
Joel ii. 16.

t iii. 5. vii. 33.
Luke ix. 54-56.
Eph. iv. 26.
u Gen. xvii. 7. 10.
-14. Num. xiv.
21. Deut. iv. 37.
xxiv. 11. 12.

v 1 Sam. i. 11, 22.
27. 28. Ps.
xxviii. 4. cxv.
14. 15. 18. lxx.
23. Jer. xxxiii.
29. 40. Luke
xviii. 15. 16.
Acts ii. 39. iii.
13. Rom. ix. 16.

w 1 Cor. vii.
24. 2 Tim. i. 5.
ii. 15.
x cxxxi. 1. 2.
Matt. xvi. 4.
x. 14. 1 Cor.
xii. 10. 1 Pet.
ii. 2.

y Matt. xviii. 3.
Luke xviii. 17.
John iii. 3-6.

them, ^a What did Moses command you?

4 And they said, ^b Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.

5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, ⁱ For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept:

6 But from ^k the beginning of the creation, ^l God made them male and female.

7 For ^m this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;

8 And they twain shall be ⁿ one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

9 What ^o therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

10 And ^p in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter.

11 And he saith unto them, ^q Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

13 ^r And ^s they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and ^t his ^u disciples rebuked those that brought them.

14 But when Jesus saw ^v that he was much displeased, and said unto them, ^w Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: ^x for of such is the kingdom of God.

15 Verily I say unto you, ^y Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

16 And ^z he took them up in his arms, put ^a his hands upon them, and blessed them.

17 ¹ And ² when he was gone forth into the way, there came one ^b running, and ^c kneeled to him, and asked him, ^d Good Master, ^e what shall I do that I may inherit ^f eternal life?

18 And Jesus said unto him ^g Why callest thou me good? ^h there is none good but one, ⁱ that is, God.

19 Thou ^j knowest the commandments, ^k Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, ^l Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, ^m all these have I observed from my youth.

21 Then Jesus, beholding him, ⁿ loved him, and said unto him, ^o One thing thou lackest: go thy way, ^p sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have ^q treasure in heaven: and come, ^r take up the cross, and follow me.

22 And he was ^s sad at that saying, and went away grieved: ^t for he had great possessions.

23 And Jesus ^u looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, ^v How hardly shall they that have riches ^w enter into the kingdom of God!

24 And the disciples were ^x astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, ^y Children, how

V. 2-12. The seeming difference (between this account and that in Matthew's Gospel,) may be removed by saying, They first asked him, Why did Moses command? And then our Saviour asked them, What were the words of Moses? And when they had repeated them, he tells them the reason why Moses gave them this permission.—(Notes, Matt. xix. 1-12.) It is here added, "If a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, &c." (12.) This case, which sometimes occurred even among the Jews, serves to confirm the conclusion, that our Lord intended to put men and women exactly on the same footing in this matter; so that the same conduct is in the man adultery against his wife, which in the woman is adultery against her husband.—Though this discourse be originally about divorce, yet it

seems plainly to evince, that polygamy must be unlawful under the Christian Economy. For, from Christ's saying, "He that putteth away his wife, and marries another, committeth adultery against her," it clearly follows, that he, who, having not put her away, marries another, must be guilty of the same crime; seeing he must have at least the same power to marry another, when the first is put away, as when she is not. Since to commit adultery is to violate the bed of another person, he that commits adultery against his wife must violate her bed, which no husband can do, only by doing that which a husband lawfully might not do. Since, then, a right to polygamy is a right to marry more wives than one, he that hath this right cannot violate the bed of his first wife, by assuming another to it. (Whitby.)

b. Job. xxi. 21.
25. Ps. xxi. 11.
xix. 6, 7, 11.
xix. 10. Prov.
10. 23. Job. 11.
xxiii. 9. Jer. 18.
22. Ec. xxviii.
4. 5. Job. x. 18.
Zeph. i. 16.
Luke x. 16.
21. xvi. 14.
1 Tim. vi. 17.
Jan. v. 1-3.
c. Jer. xli. 20. Mat.
xv. 3-5. xix.
24. 25. xxiii. 24.
Luke xviii. 25.
24. 51. vii. 37.
2 Cor. xi. 23.
d. Luke xli. 20.
xvi. 26. Acts.
xvi. 31. Rom.
9-19.
1 Gen. xxi. 17.
14. Num. xi.
21-23. 2 Kings.
19. 2. Zech.
13. 6. Matt.
xix. 26. Luke.
xix. 27.
e. John xlii. 2 Jer.
xxviii. 17. 27.
Luke i. 37. Phil.
1. 21. Heb. vii.
25. xi. 19.
1. 16-20. Matt.
xix. 27-30.
Luke xix. 37.
xxiii. 23-30.
Phil. ii. 7-9.
1 Gen. xii. 1-3.
xlv. 20. Deut.
xxviii. 9-11.
Luke xxi. 28.
2. Heb. xii. 21.
-26.
f. Job. 35. Matt. v. 10, 11. x. 10. 1 Cor. iii. 23. Rev. ii. 3. —12. Ec. xxi. 9. Ps. lxxviii.
1. Prov. 10. 20. xvi. 16. Mal. iii. 10. Matt. xiii. 44-46. 2 Cor. x. 18. 9-11.
1 Phil. iii. 9. 2 Thes. ii. 16. 1 Tim. vi. 6. 1 John iii. 1. Rev. ii. 9. 10. 13.

hard is it for them that ^a trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

25 It is ^c easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

26 And they were astonished ^d out of measure, saying among themselves, ^e Who then can be saved?

27 And Jesus, looking upon them, saith, ^f With men ^g it is impossible, but not with God: ^h for with God all things are possible.

28 Then Peter began to say unto him, ⁱ Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, ^j There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, ^k for my sake, and the gospel's,

30 But he shall receive ^l an hundred-

fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, ^m with persecutions; and in the world to come ⁿ eternal life.

31 But ^o many ^p that are first shall be last; and the last first.

32 ^q And ^r they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and ^s they were amazed: and as they followed, they were afraid. ^t And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him.

33 Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; ^u and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall ^v condemn him to death, and shall ^w deliver him to the Gentiles:

34 And they shall ^x mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall ^y spit upon him, and shall kill him; ^z and the third day he shall rise again.

V. 13-31. (Notes, Matt. xix. 13-30. 14-61.) — Christ's showing his regard in such a manner to the children, not only must have been exceedingly pleasing to the parents, but the memory of this condescension might make tender and lasting impressions on the children themselves; and the sight must be very edifying and encouraging to other young persons, who might happen to be present. Nicephorus tells, that the celebrated Ignatius, afterwards bishop of Antioch, was one of these infants. Our Lord might reasonably be one more displeased with the disciples, for endeavouring to prevent their being brought, as he had so lately set a child among them, and insisted on the necessity of their 'being made conformable to it.' (Dodridge.) The language, in this Gospel, is more emphatical than that in St. Matthew: and it must be obvious, that the exhortations and instructions, which might have been addressed both to the parents and the children, and by the parents to their children, as a subsequent improvement of the transaction, must have been in many respects familiar to those which may be grounded on infant baptism, when duly improved. And the passage, though not a direct proof, has surely a favourable aspect towards bringing our infant-offspring to Christ, seeking his blessing on them, and devoting them to his service in this ordinance; provided it is done intelligently and uprightly. *Good master.* (17.) It is said that the Rabbinæ affected this title, which shows the peculiar propriety of our Lord's answer. *Defraud not.* (19.) This seems to be here placed as the rendering of the tenth commandment. 'Surely all endeavours to defraud show a very covetous mind, inclining us, against the dictates of our consciences, and to the damage of our precious

souls, to defraud another of his right. The word signifies also, to detain, and keep back a thing when it is due. — And surely they who desire thus to detain that which belongs to others, and they know they much want, must covet, to have at that time what is another's. He pays less than he ought, who pays not in due time.' (Whitby.) (Note, Ec. xx. 17.) *Loved him.* (21.) There was a natural amiableness in this young ruler, compared with the base conduct of the Scribes, Pharisees, and many others, which excited our Lord's compassion; and as he was like us in all things, sin excepted, we may suppose that he felt that tender regard for him, which pious ministers do for some in their congregations, who appear amiable, moral, and benevolent, but whom they do not consider at present as truly religious. *Take up thy cross.* (21.) (Marg. Ref.) *Trust in riches.* (24.) (Marg. Ref.) The danger consists, not in possessing but confiding in riches, and the difficulty, in possessing and not confiding in them. *With persecutions.* (30.) Or notwithstanding persecutions; for where tribulation abounded, consolation likewise abounded. (Marg. Ref.) The comfort of communion with God, as aided greatly by the communion of the saints, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, seem especially intended.

V. 32-34. As our Lord and his disciples were on their last journey to Jerusalem, they (being aware of the inveterate malice of his enemies, and of their designs against his life, and having heard many intimations from him of his approaching sufferings,) were greatly amazed at the resolution with which he went before them; and they followed him with great fear of the dangers to which they too were likely to be exposed. (John xi. 7. 16.)

CHAP. XI.

*Jesus enters Jerusalem, riding on an ass,**amid the acclamations of the multitude,
1—11. He curses a barren fig-tree, 12*

Inquiring therefore what the concourse of people meant, he learned that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by; and immediately he conceived hope of recovering his sight by miracle. Accordingly he began, without delay or hesitation, to cry out, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy upon me." Our Lord might perhaps be then engaged in discourse with his attendants, and as Bartimeus was a mean person, and his application rude and clamorous, many present charged him to hold his peace. He was, however, too much in earnest to be thus silenced, and to lose his opportunity; on the contrary, he cried out a great deal more earnestly and incessantly than before, "Thou Son of David, have mercy upon me." At length our Lord stood still, and ordered the blind man to be conducted to him: and they who informed him, encouraged him to expect a cure, as Jesus called for him. Accordingly he cast away his upper garment, as in haste, and wanting to be rid of every encumbrance, and thus he came to Jesus, who asked him, "What he would that he should do unto him?" He well knew what he wanted; but he chose to hear it from his own lips, as the language of faith, dependence, and expectation. When, therefore, the man had answered, "Lord, that I might receive my sight," Jesus bade him "go his way," or depart in peace; for his faith, by leading him to seek help from him, had been the means of his being restored to sight, and even of his salvation. Immediately he received sight; but instead of departing he joined the multitude, and followed Jesus in the way, full of joy and gratitude, and glorifying God for the mercy which he had received; and all the people joined him in praising the Lord for what had been done. Bartimeus signifies in Syriac the son of Timeus. Some think, that he was thus specially named, because he afterwards became of note among our Lord's disciples.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—16.

Our blessed Lord hath given his ministers an example of being "instant in season and out of season, in preaching the word," whenever or wherever the people are disposed to hear it; and that notwithstanding the perverseness and malice of those who watch for their halting. We should expect to be frequently proved with ensnaring questions, from proud pharisees and infidels; and we should study to be expert in answering them pertinently, and in the meekness of wisdom. In general, our appeal must be to the plain testimony of God's word: yet in applying texts of Scripture to particular cases, an accurate attention to the design of the sacred writer is absolutely necessary; and many distinctions must be noted between temporary appointments or allowances, "because of the hardness of men's hearts," or with reference to peculiar circumstances, and those truths and precepts, which are of universal and immutable importance and obligation. For it is evident, in fact, that almost all errors in doctrine and practice have been grounded on wrong inferences

from detached texts, either misinterpreted, or misapplied to cases to which they have no relation. But the humble, teachable, and unprejudiced, who love the truths and ways of God, and depend on the teaching of the Holy Spirit, will be conducted safe through such difficulties as are absolutely insurmountable to those who lean to their own understandings. True religion will teach us our duty in every relation of life, and render us comfortable in ourselves, and blessings to each other in them; so that even those restrictions, which to carnal men appear intolerable, become easy and pleasant to the consistent Christian; and he considers the liberty and indulgence for which they contend as the source of confusion, debasement, and misery. They "whom God hath joined together," and taught to be helpers and blessings to each other, as having one common inseparable interest here, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, if they have children, will bring them, by their united prayers, to Jesus, that he may impart his salvation to their souls; and he will be much displeased with those, who would discourage them in so doing; for all ought to be exhorted to seek his blessing on those with whom they are connected. Even little children should be suffered and directed to go to the loving Saviour, as soon as they are capable of understanding his words: they should be assured that he will regard their lisping petitions: and all his ministers should copy his condescension, and attentive regard to the lambs of the flock, the young, the newly awakened, the weak believers, the poor, or the discouraged, that they may be his instruments in gathering them to him, and in leading them to establishment and comfort. Whilst we consider the case of children, and remember that "of such is the kingdom of God," let us peculiarly attend to our Lord's declaration, that "whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter therein." No learned scribe, or philosopher, no man of the most distinguished learning, or superior abilities, can be a true subject of the kingdom of grace here, or an heir of the kingdom of glory hereafter, who doth not stoop to receive the instructions and blessings of the kingdom in the simple teachable spirit, that a little child learns the first elements of knowledge from its nurse, parent, or teacher. "If any man therefore be wise in this world," he must become as a fool, if he would be wise unto salvation: and as scarcely any thing militates more against this submission of the understanding to the divine teaching, or the exercise of implicit faith in the word of God, and a willing dependence on him, and unreserved subjection to his will, in the appointments of his providence and the dispensations of his grace, than the pride of human wisdom, so not many of the wise and learned, any more than of the rich and noble, have hitherto been found among the followers of Christ.

V. 17—31.

Whatever increases pride, and an attachment to the world, must enhance the difficulty of a man's embracing the Gospel. If it were not God's determination that "no

—14; and drives the traders from the temple, 15—19. The fig-tree being dried up, he shows his disciples the power

of faith, and directs them how to pray, 20—26. He silences the priests, &c. who questioned his authority, 27—33.

"flesh should glory in his presence," the case of rulers, scribes, and pharisees, would be more hopeful. Many of them will call Jesus "good Master;" seem to have some thoughts about eternal life, and approve, and even profess, very exactly to obey several of the commandments; but they have not understood the holiness of the divine character, the spirituality and extent of the holy law, the evil of sin, their own guilt and depravity, the nature of salvation, or their need of the Redeemer's blood, righteousness, and regenerating Spirit. A sharp trial often proves their moral goodness to be radically defective, and to be carnal selfishness in a more decent garb; so that self-denying impoverishing duties no more suit their love of this present world, than the doctrines of grace do their self-admiration. They seem to be sorry that they cannot reconcile God and Mammon, and both obey Christ and keep the world, but they cannot think of leaving an earthly treasure which they have in possession, for the hope of a heavenly treasure in reversion, by taking up the cross and following Christ. All these evils are enhanced by increasing wealth: few can possess riches, without loving and trusting in them; and it is very hard to break the strong bands, which hold a carnal mind to large possessions. So that Jesus speaks to us as to children, when he reminds us; "how hardly they that have riches shall enter into the kingdom of heaven!" And instead of expressing our astonishment, or indulging our speculations, let us learn contentment in a low estate; or, if a higher be allotted us, let us watch against confidence in riches, and the love of them, or any thing that can be purchased with them. Let us pray to be enabled to part with every earthly object for Christ's sake, and to use all which we are allowed to keep in his service: and let us be encouraged to pray for the rich, as well as for others, and to employ all the means we can for their good, by remembering "that with God all things are possible." But whatever our circumstances be, we shall be called to prove the sincerity of our faith and love, by renouncing some temporal advantage for Christ's sake, if we profess to be his followers. The trial in this case may be sharp, but the recollection of having made the required sacrifice will afterwards turn unto us for a testimony; and to encourage us in so doing, we are assured of an immense compensation in this present world, as well as of eternal life in that to come. If we have true faith, we shall be satisfied with this security, and expect the promised blessing; and thus well regulated self-love will be reconciled to self-denial, renunciation of worldly objects, and persecution for Christ's sake. But such trials lay open men's hearts, and thus "the first become last, and the last first."

V. 32—45.

Even disciples are often more disposed to be amazed at our Lord's contempt of the world, and patient endurance of poverty, hardship, contempt, suffering, and death, for them, than to consider him as having left them an ex-

ample, that they should follow his steps; and though they do follow him, even when danger approaches, yet they do it fearfully, and with hesitation and reluctance. Indeed, when we consider that the holy Jesus endured every indignity and cruelty from Jewish priests and scribes, who delivered him up to the insults of Gentile rulers and soldiers as a condemned malefactor, we cannot expect exemption from reproach and suffering, however prudent, blameless, or benevolent, our conduct may be: but the view of his glorious resurrection may encourage our hope of a happy event to all our conflicts. It must be lamented, that honour, glory, and immortality, in a future world, and obscurity, poverty, contempt, and persecution here, are but ill suited to the desires of most of those who are called Christians: nay, sanctification must be considerably advanced in us, before we shall be unreservedly reconciled to them. If Jesus would gratify all our desires, it would soon appear, that we were aspiring to reputation, authority, popularity, or eminence, among our brethren; and that we were unwilling to taste of his cup, or to have any measure of his baptism, if we could by any means have avoided it. We should often ask for "we know not what," and should be effectually ruined, by having our own prayers answered. But he loves us more wisely than we love ourselves; and he will give us what is good for us, not what we hanker after. We are indeed often keen-sighted in discerning, and severe in reproving, the vain glory and ambition of our brethren; but prone to fall into the same faults in our competitions with them; yet our gracious Master gently rebukes us, and gradually corrects our foolish desires of pre-eminence. He teaches us to leave lordly authority, vain distinctions, and the praise of men, to Gentiles and nominal disciples; and to follow him, in aspiring after true greatness, by self-abasement, serviceableness, and a readiness to labour and suffer in any way, for the glory of God and for the good of souls.

V. 46—52.

Whilst enlightened believers are admonished daily to behold the glory of their Lord, till they are more completely changed into his image, let sinners be exhorted to imitate blind Bartimeus. While men are favoured with the use of their eyes, how diligent should they be in searching the Scriptures, and storing their memories with them; that, if visited with blindness, they may have something treasured up, on which they may profitably meditate, and with which they may compare what they hear, either from preachers, or concerning them! And when the Lord deprives any of the use of one sense, how diligent should they be in improving those which they still enjoy! In these respects this interesting narrative is before us an instructive and encouraging example. But if the eyes of men's understandings be not opened to behold the preciousness of Christ, and the beauty of holiness, they are shut up under a far more dreadful darkness, and precluded from far more delightful prospects and exquisite pleasures, in

a Matt. xxi. 1.
June xix 22

b xlii 3 Sam
xxvii Zech xiv
4 Matt xxiv 30
John xxi 1 Acts 12
c vi 7 xix 13
d Matt xxi 2, 3
Luke xix 30—
34

e Ps xxii. 1 Acts
x 36, 2 Cor. viii
9 Heb. ii 9
f xvi 15 1 Chr
xxix 12—18 Ps
cx. 3 Acts 124
g Matt xxi 6, 7
xxix 19 Luke
xix 12—34 John
ii. 3, Heb. xii 8

h Zech. ix. 9
Matt xxi 4, 5
Luke xix. 35.
i 2 Kings ix. 13.
Matt xxi. 7.
Luke ix. 36.
John xii 12—18.

AND ^a when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage, and Bethany, ^b at the mount of Olives, ^c he sendeth forth two of his disciples,

2 And saith unto them, ^d Go your way into the village over against you; and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him.

3 And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye, ^e That the Lord hath need of him; ^f and straightway he will send him hither.

4 And they went their way, ^g and found the colt tied by the door without, in a place where two ways met; and they loose him.

5 And certain of them that stood there said unto ^h them, What do ye loosing the colt?

6 And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.

7 And they brought ⁱ the colt to Jesus, ^j and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.

respect of the spiritual world, than any blind man in respect to the natural. But where the Gospel is preached, or the written word vouchsafed, Jesus is passing by; and this is the sinner's opportunity. Though he cannot understand the doctrine of Christ, nor see his glory, yet let him, as a perishing sinner, cry after him, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me." And if any man attempt to dissuade, deride, and reproach him, or to threaten him into silence, let him take occasion from thence to cry the more earnestly for salvation. In this way the Saviour will notice him; and his invitations and promises will, as it were, direct him to be called. We too should delight in encouraging inquiring souls, and in bidding them be of good comfort, while they arise and go to Jesus, who calleth them by his word, and will not cast them out. In seeking to him, all delay must be avoided, and every impediment laid aside; and he will, as it were, inquire of us, What we would have? We should therefore study to get acquainted with our own wants and with his promises, that we may have our answer ready, and find liberty and earnestness in prayer. Thus faith brings salvation from Christ into men's souls; and they join the company of his disciples, in showing forth his praises, and in walking in his most holy ways.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI. V. 1—11. (Notes, Matt. xxi. 1—11. Marg. Ref.) (4.) The exact knowledge which our Lord showed, of so many minute and most fortuitous particulars, must surely impress the minds of these messengers greatly, and establish the faith of his followers. It is observable, that many such things occurred

8 And many spread their garments in the way; and others ^k cut down branches off the trees, and strewed *them* in the way.

9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, ^l Hosanna; Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord:

10 Blessed *be* ^m the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna ⁿ in the highest.

11 And ^o Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the even-tide was come, ^p he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

12 ^q And ^r on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, ^s he was hungry:

13 And ^t seeing a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came, if ^u haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.

k Lev. xxiii 40
l Ps cxviii 25, 26
Matt xxi. 9
xxii. 39. Luke
xvii. 36. John
xi. 13. xix 15.

m Isaix 6. 7 Jer
xxxix 13—17
26. Ez. xxvii.
23, 24. xxxviii.
24, 25. Hos. ii.
6. Am. ix. 11, 12
Luke i. 31, 32
Ps. cxlviii. 1
Luke ii. 14. 32.
33—40.
o Mal. ii. 1 Matt.
xix 10—12 14—
16. Luke xix
41—45.

p Matt. xx. 17
Luke xxi. 37, 38
John viii 1, 2.
q Matt. xxi 18
r Matt. ii. 2 Luke
iv 2. John iv 6.
7. 31—33. xix 20.
Heb. ii. 17.
s Matt. xxi. 15.
Luke xiii 6—9

t Ruth ii. 3. 1
Sam. vi. 9
Luke x 31 xii
6, 7.

'a little before his death, which, considered in this view, 'have a peculiar beauty.' (xiv. 15, 16. Matt. xxvi. 31—35. Luke xxii. 10—13.) (Doddridge)—What do, &c.? (5.) The owners made this demand, (Luke xix. 33.) Thus every occasion of objection was precluded. The coll. (7.) 'It seems to have been a miracle, that such a colt should patiently suffer Christ to ride upon him.' Blessed, &c. (10.) 'Let the kingdom be happily begun, and flourish, which God is to erect, according to his promise to our father David. Let prosperity be from heaven to the King Messiah and to his kingdom.' (Whitby.)

V. 13. The time, &c. It is evident, that the fruit on the common fig-trees must have been utterly unfit for food at this early season of the year: for though the fig-tree puts forth its blossom before the leaves, yet the fruit must have been very small at the passover, which is said by the Jewish writers to be five months before the time of ripe figs, (xiii. 28.) It has been said, that our Lord found only leaves, and no fruit of any kind, and therefore this must have been a barren tree; for if the fruit were not set, there could be none that year. But this could be no reason why he should, when hungry, seek fruit on it to eat: as there could have been none fit for use, however fruitful it might promise to be. The following quotation seems to contain the true solution of the difficulty. 'Let it be noted, that St. Mark doth not by these words, "for the time of figs was not yet," assign a reason why our Lord found no figs upon the tree; but why he went to this one tree, which had leaves on it, and so was of that kind of figs, that had always leaves; and why he expected to find fruit on that tree,

14 And Jesus answered and said unto it, "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.

15 ¶ And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrow the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves;

16 And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple.

17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations, The house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

18 And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people were astonished at his doctrine.

19 And when even was come, he went out of the city.

20 ¶ And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots.

21 And Peter, calling to remembrance, saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away!

22 And Jesus answering, saith unto them, Have faith in God:

23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

which, upon the ordinary fig-trees abounding there, he could not expect, the time of ordinary figs not being yet. For this kind of fig-tree, being ever green with leaves, hath, saith Theophrastus, old and new fruit hanging on it together; the fruit of the year past and present, say the Jewish doctors. Accordingly, Julian the apostate, speaking of the fruit of Damascus, saith, some of them were but of a short duration; only the fig-tree carries its fruit above a year, and it hangs on with the fruit of the following year. (Whitby.) The fig-trees, in this country, seem in general to be of this kind, though the frost kills their leaves; but the case in Judea was different; so that the time of ripe figs, on the ordinary fig-trees, was not come; but fruit might have been expected on this tree, because its leaves showed it to be of the other species. Thus it was an apt emblem of the Jewish nation, whose profession of true religion gave an expectation of fruit; though none could have been looked for among the Gentiles. But as this expectation was not answered, the nation was rejected, and has ever since continued unfruitful.

V. 16. Would, &c. This circumstance is not mentioned by Matthew; and it rather favours the supposition, that Christ purged the temple two days successively, and more completely the second day than before. In order to vindicate the sanctity of that holy place, and to keep up the distinction between its sacred services and all kinds of secular business, he would not suffer any man to carry any vessel or burden through its courts, on any pretence whatever. (Note, Matt. xxi. 12—14.)

V. 22—26. (Note, Matt. xxi. 18—22. Marg. Ref.) The apostles were exhorted to have faith in God, or the

faith of God; that is, a firm confidence in his power and truth, as enabling them to effect those things which they undertook in his name. This was peculiarly applicable to the exercise of faith required in working miracles. These were generally introduced by some solemn declaration of what was intended, which was in effect a prediction of immediate success. So Peter says, (Acts iii. 6,) In the name of Jesus Christ, rise up, and walk; and, (ix. 34,) "Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." And in pronouncing this, the person speaking pawned all his credit as a messenger from God, and consequently all the honour and usefulness of his future life, on the immediate miraculous energy to attend his words, and to be visibly exerted on his uttering them. Hence it is, that such a firm courageous faith is so often urged on those, to whom such miraculous powers were given. (Doddridge.) Such exhortations, however, should also be regarded, in all our expectations and prayers, grounded on the promises of God, which will certainly be fulfilled to every believer, in the proper meaning of them, and in due season; and this we should expect, notwithstanding difficulties and apparent improbabilities. Therefore, whatever we desire, when we pray, we should confidently hope to receive, and go on with our work as though we had received it. But if we would thus have confidence in prayer before a holy God, we must have an assured hope of his merciful forgiveness; in order to which we must fully and heartily forgive all that have injured us. (Notes, &c. Matt. vi. 12, 14, 15. xviii. 21—35.) Standing seems to have been a frequent posture in prayer among the Jews, though kneeling is most sanctioned by the

27 ¶ And they come again to Jerusalem: and, as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders,

28 And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?

29 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

30 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me.

31 And they reasoned with themselves,

saying, If we shall say, From heaven, he will say, Why then did ye not believe him?

32 But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.

33 And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering, saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

CHAP. XII.

The parable of the vineyard let out to

example of Christ and his apostles; and indeed in most parts of the Old Testament.

V. 27—33. (Notes, Matt. xxi. 23—32. Marg. Ref.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—19.

We should learn from our divine Master to meet sufferings in a good cause with constancy and alacrity; and to be bold and open in our profession of the truth, when its enemies grow virulent and determined in opposition. The undeniable proofs which he gave, during his humiliation on earth, of his knowledge of all events and his influence over all hearts, should inspire us with implicit confidence, and excite us to an unreserved obedience: for we shall find all his words true and faithful, and he will carry us through all difficulties and reproaches that we meet with in his service. It is a peculiar honour and felicity to be instrumental, in any way, to the display of his glory. His kingdom is not of this world, and therefore its external appearance is often mean; and its subjects and ministers must not affect worldly grandeur, or be ashamed of appearing poor and despised in the eyes of carnal men: but "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," are their privileges, which are of more value than all earthly honours and riches whatever. These we should first seek for ourselves, and then aim to communicate to others; and we ought to welcome all those, who come in the name of the Lord, to promote the peace and prosperity of his kingdom, rejoicing greatly for their success in this good work. Whilst we expect the great Head of the Church effectually to purge it from all hirelings and abuses, that it may no more be reproached as a den of thieves, but may be indeed a house of prayer and spiritual worship to all nations, how active should rulers and teachers be, in doing what they can to promote the scriptural administration of his ordinances, the sanctification of his holy day, and the faithful preaching of his word; and to establish and maintain a decided distinction between things sacred and secular! And at great a distance should all, who love and preach the truth, keep from every appearance of turning their ministry into a lucrative trade!—Alas, that chief priests, scribes, and elders, should so frequently be

the most inveterate opposers of reformation, from a mistaken regard to their own interests and reputation, which in fact they thus undermine and destroy! Such men often set themselves against the truth, for fear of the consequences of it getting ground, when they find the people attentive and impressed. Thus they enter on a contest, from which they cannot recede with credit, and in which they cannot persist, without the most fatal consequences; for, though they should for a time be successful, they must in the event be crushed by the power of the exalted Redeemer.

V. 20—33.

Alas, how many professed Christians and ministers are barren fig-trees, covered with leaves, raising and disappointing the expectations of those who seek fruit from them, and exposing themselves to the doom of withering, and remaining unfruitful, under the awful curse of the Lord! We should fear this sentence worse than death, and should rest in no religion that does not render us fruitful in good works. This will be the sure effect of "faith in God," in proportion as it is vigorous and lively. Thus our feeble attempts to do good may be rendered more successful than we could have imagined, by a divine blessing on our labours of love: and though we do not possess superior abilities, or station, influence, or authority, we may yet make a useful stand against the prevalence of impiety and iniquity, by the silent efficacy of fervent constant prayers, whilst we "lift up holy hands, without wrath and doubting," and provided our petitions are dictated by a forgiving and loving spirit towards men, as well as by zeal for the honour of God, we may in this way, and by a Christian example and conversation, by "words spoken in due season," and various other similar attempts, be useful, without any one having so much as a pretence for inquiring "by what authority we do such things?" But should we be called out to more public services, whilst we act by the commission, and according to the instructions of Christ, we need not greatly regard opposers, and shall not want a ready and pertinent answer to the inquiries of such as presume to interfere; though they are evidently ignorant of the most obvious and important distinction betwixt those, who act by authority from heaven, and those who are only sent forth by man.

p. Matt. xxii. 23.
 ne. Luke xx.
 23. x.
 7. Acts. iv. 1, 2.
 8. xxi. 6-9. 1 Cor.
 xxi. 13-15. 2
 Tim. ii. 16.
 1. Gen. xxviii. 9.
 1. Gen. xxviii. 9.
 10. Ruth. iv. 5.

p. Matt. xxi. 25.
 ne. Luke xx. 29.
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1. 1. viii. 26. Jer.
 vii. 7-9. Jer.
 vi. 9. viii. 12.
 Matt. xxii. 29.
 1. Luke. xx. 24.
 1. John. v. 30. xxi.
 9. Acts. xxi. 11.
 1. Rom. xiv. 4.
 2. Tim. ii. 15-
 12.

1. 1. viii. 25-27.
 1. 1. xxv. 2. xxvi.
 12. 1. 1. xxviii.
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x. x. 27. Gen.
 xxviii. 14. Jer.
 xxxiii. 17. Luke.
 i. 37. Eph. i. 13.
 20. Phil. ii. 21.

y. Matt. xxi. 30.
 1. Luke. xx. 35. 36.
 1. Cor. xv. 42.
 1. 1. Heb. xii. 22.
 23. 1. John. iii. 2.
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18 ¶ Then ^a come unto him the Sadducees, which ^a say there is no resurrection: and they asked him, saying,

19 Master, Moses wrote unto us, ^a If a man's brother die, and leave *his* wife *behind him*, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

20 Now ^a there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying, left no seed.

21 And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise.

22 And the seven had her, and left no seed: *last* of all the woman died also.

23 In the resurrection, therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife.

24 And Jesus answering, said unto them, ^a Do ye not therefore err, ^a because ye know not the Scriptures, ^a neither the power of God?

25 For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; ^a but are as the angels which are in heaven.

26 And as touching the dead, that they rise; ^a have ye not read ^a in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, ^b I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?

27 He ^c is not the God of the dead,

but the God of the living: ^a ye therefore do greatly err.

28 ¶ And ^a one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, ^a Which is the first commandment of all?

29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, ^a Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord:

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment.

31 And the second is like, *namely* this, ^b Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

32 And the Scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: ^a for there is one God; and there is none other but He:

33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *his* neighbour as himself, ^k is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.

34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, ^a Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. ^a And no man after that durst ask him any question.

as hunters entangled, and caught the hunted animals, in their nets and toils. *Shall, &c.* They urged our Lord to answer explicitly. 'Perhaps the very circumstance of taking upon him to determine such a question might, by these invidious inquirers, be construed as a pretence to sovereignty.' (*Doddridge.*) "the meekness of wisdom," was never more beautifully manifested, than in our Lord's most instructive answer to so insidious a question. And nothing can be more worthy of imitation than this particular in his conduct; that he always took occasion, even from the most captious and frivolous questions, and impertinent interruptions, which would have excited contempt, disdain, or indignation, in others, calmly to call the attention of the hearers to some very important observation and instructions.

V. 18—27. (*Notes, Matt. xxii. 22—33. Luke xx. 27—40. Marg. Ref.*)

V. 28—34. (*Note, Matt. xxii. 34—40.*) St. Matthew informs us, that this *scribe, lawyer, or doctor* of the law, was one of the company that convened together, to consult in what manner they should proceed against Jesus; and

that he asked the question *tempting him*, at the same time that he allowed he had satisfactorily answered the objections of the Sadducees. He was not exempt from the prejudices of the other Scribes and Pharisees against Jesus, but it is evident that he had deeper convictions and juster apprehensions about religion than the rest of them. To prove Jesus still further, how he could resolve difficult questions, and perhaps with some design of entangling him in his discourse, he asked him "Which was the first," or greatest, "commandment in the whole law?" The Pharisees and Jewish teachers had several frivolous disputes on this subject, suited to their other superstitions. Our Lord, however, took no notice of these controversies, but returned a direct answer to the question; referring the Scribe to the summary of the first table of the Law, which Moses had given them, and which hath already been fully explained, (*Notes, Deut. vi. 4, 5.*) This he declared to be "the first commandment;" as it is of the highest possible importance and obligation, and as it virtually implies in it all other commandments. He added, that the rule of loving our neighbours as ourselves was the second in im-

d. 21. Prov. xix.
 27. Heb. iii. 10.

e. Matt. xxii. 34—
 40.

(Matt. v. 19. xix.
 17. 20. 23.
 1. Luke. x. 42.)

2. 32. 33. Deut. vi.
 4. 5. 6. 10. xxvi.
 3. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1.
 56. Matt. x. 27.
 1. Tim. i. 5.

b. Lev. xix. 18.
 1. Matt. xii. 12.
 1. x. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1.
 35. Luke. x. 27.
 26. 37. Rom.
 xiii. 4. 9. 1. Cor.
 xiii. 4-9. Gal.

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 6. xiv. 6. 14. 15.
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Jer. x. 10-12.
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n xi. 27. Luke
xix. 47. xxi. 1
xii. 37. John
xv. 20
o Matt. xxii. 42.
Luke xx. 41-44
44. John vii. 32
p 2 Sam. xxiii. 2
Neh. ix. 30
Matt. xxiii. 43
45. Acts. 1. 16
xxviii. 25.
2 Tim. iii. 16
Heb. iii. 7, 8
Jv. 7. 1 Pet. 1.
11, 2 Pet. 1. 21
q Eccl. 1. Acts
ii. 34-36 1 Cor.
xv. 25. Heb. 1.
12. 12. 13.
r Matt. 23. 23
Rom. 1. 3. 4. ix.
5. 1 Tim. iii. 16
s Rev. xxi. 16
Matt. xi. 5. 25
xxi. 46. Luke
xi. 46. xvi. 36
John vii. 48-
49. Jam. ii. 5
t v. 7.
u Matt. x. 17.
xxiii. 1-7. Luke
xx. 45-47.
v Matt. vi. 5.
Luke xi. 43.
xix. 7-11. 3.
John 9.
y Jam. ii. 2. 3.

35 ¶ And Jesus answered and said,
n while he taught in the temple, ° How
say the scribes that Christ is the Son of
David?

¶ For David himself said ° by the Holy
Ghost, ° The Lord said to my Lord,
Sit thou on my right hand, till I make
thine enemies thy footstool.

37 David therefore himself calleth him
Lord; ° and whence is he then his Son?
¶ And the common people heard him
gladly.

38 ¶ And he ° said unto them in his
doctrine, ° Beware of the Scribes, ° which
love to go in long clothing, and love salu-
tations in the market-places,

89 And ° the chief seats in the syna-
gogues, and the uppermost rooms at
feasts;

40 Which ° devour widows' houses,
and for a pretence make ° long prayers:
these shall receive greater damnation.

41 ¶ And Jesus ° sat over against the
treasury, and beheld how the people cast
° money into the treasury: and many that
were rich cast in much.

42 And there came a certain poor wi-
dow, and she threw in two † mites, which
make a farthing.

43 And he called unto him his disci-
ples, and saith unto them, Verily I say un-
to you, ° That this poor widow hath cast
more in, than all they which have cast in-
to the treasury:

44 For all they did ° cast in of their
abundance; but she of her want did
cast in all that she had, even ° all her
living.

portance, and of a similar nature: this too hath been explained, (Note, Lev. xix. 12.) He then declared, that there was no other commandment greater than these; as on them depended all the law and the prophets. When these two precepts are properly explained and understood, they are found to contain the substance of all that was commanded in the law or enforced by the prophets: unless these be properly received and observed, no thing else in religion is of any value; in proportion as they are understood, all other parts of Scripture are unfolded in their nature, use, and importance; and whilst the types, predictions, and promises of Christ in the Gospel are illustrated, the pardoned and justified believer, loving and obeying in his measure these great commandments, cannot but attend to every other part of his duty to God and man. This answer of Christ was so satisfactory and convincing, that the Scribe could not but allow, that he had spoken the truth on that subject in a most excellent manner; and that all sacrifices, however numerous and costly, were comparatively of small value. These were typical atone-
ments for transgressions of the moral law; and they were of no efficacy, except as they were the expression of repentance, and faith in the promised Saviour, and as they led to moral obedience. When Jesus, therefore, heard the Scribe answer so discreetly, and like a man who knew something of the nature of true religion, and of the spirituality and excellency of the moral law; he declared that "he was not far from the kingdom of God." For this knowledge of the law leads to conviction of sin, to repentance, to a discovery of our need of mercy, and to an understanding of the way of justification by faith in Christ. Probably this man afterwards became a disciple of our Lord. (Notes, &c. Ex. xx.) The quotation, of the first and great commandment, here made, is not exactly either from the Hebrew, or the Septuagint; but contains the evident meaning of the passage. The clause "with all thy mind," or "with all the understanding," is additional; and shows that, in general, all the capacities of the rational soul are intended.

V. 35-37. (Note, Matt. xxii. 41-46. Marg. Ref.) By the Holy Ghost. ° By a divine afflatus, or the Spirit ° of prophecy. This deserves to be noted by them who ° deny that the Psalms of David were writ by the Spirit ° of prophecy. (Whitby.) (Marg. Ref.) The same preposition is used, as in Matthew, where it is rendered "in Spirit;" and where Christians are exhorted to pray "in the Spirit," or "in the Holy Ghost;" that is, evidently, "by the Holy Spirit," as depending on his sacred influences for teaching and assistance. (Eph. vi. 18. Jude 20.) Except as the Messiah had authority over David, when he wrote the hundred and tenth Psalm; ° how great ° a monarch soever he might be, he could not have been properly called David's Lord; any more than Julius ° Cesar could have been called the lord of Romulus, be- cause he reigned in Rome seven hundred years after ° Romulus' death, and vastly extended the bounds of that ° empire which Romulus had founded. (Dodridge.)

V. 38-40. (Notes, &c. Matt. xxiii.)

V. 41-44. (Marg. Ref.) Our Lord, being about finally to leave the temple, sat down over against the treasury, into which the people put money for the defraying of several expenses incurred by the stated services of the sanctuary. Whilst he there beheld the Jews making their oblations, he observed several rich persons contributing large sums; but at length a poor widow put in two mites, amounting at most to a farthing of our money; and he declared that she had cast in more than all the rest: for the large donations of the rich were merely a part of their superfluities, and bore a small proportion to the abundance that still remained for their own expenses and indulgence; but she had in reality cast in all her living, having nothing left to buy food for herself, save what she might afterwards earn by labour, or procure in some other precarious manner. Doubtless our Lord saw her heart humble and upright, devoted to God, and desirous to express her affection to his worship; and that she did not cast in her pittance out of any affection of singularity, or expectation of being applauded for it, but in dependence

CHAP. XIII.

Christ predicts the destruction of the temple, &c. 1, 2, and shows what signs and calamities should go before, 3—23, and what should happen at the time of

on the promises and providence of God, and out of love to his name. Others in such circumstances would have pleaded, that so small a sum would be of no use, and that they could not spare it; and many would have derided this poor widow, or dissuaded her from making any oblation: but our Lord approved and commended her conduct; thus teaching us many important lessons, to direct and encourage us in our several duties.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—12.

We are answerable for all those peculiar advantages which are afforded us, in order to our becoming fruitful in good works. Our gracious Lord, the Proprietor of the vineyard, waits for the fruits till the due season; but he will by no means dispense with any who do not render them: and as we are more favoured than the Jews of old were, so our doom will be more dreadful, if we continue unfruitful. The sacred Scriptures in our hands, or in our houses, and the labours of faithful preachers, are so many demands on us to render the due revenue of glory to God, by the holiness of our lives: and the coming of the beloved Son of the Father, and all his miracles, doctrines, and salvation, were intended to supply us with motives, encouragements, and assistance, for fruitfulness. But proud and carnal men, though they profess themselves the worshippers of God, will be exceedingly offended at these truths and warnings; and even rulers and teachers, to whom the vineyard hath especially been let out, have often been ready to abuse, beat, and murder the servants of God, who have come to demand the fruits in their Master's name; and they have shown no reverence even to his Son; nay, have acted with decided contempt and enmity against him, for the sake of their own credit, authority, and secular interest! Thus have the builders rejected the Corner-stone of the temple to their own ruin, and, in securing their present advantages, have come short of "the inheritance of the saints in light." Let sinners beware of this proud carnal spirit, and remember, that if they are offended by the faithful reproofs and admonitions of ministers, they would have been far more irritated by those of Jesus Christ, had they lived when he was on earth, and would therefore have concurred with his crucifiers. If they are provoked to revile or ridicule their teachers, instead of profiting by their labours, they would easily be tempted to abuse or murder them, were the power in their hands: for when this disposition prevails, the more plain and convincing the truth is rendered, the greater rage and enmity it excites. Let us then regard and profit by the instructions of the Lord's servants, as a proof that we really reverence his Son: and let us seek grace from him, to render us fruitful in the works of righteousness, to the glory of his name; that our privileges may be continued to us, and that our

his coming, 24—27. The parable of a fig-tree, showing the near and certain approach of these events, 28—31. No man knows the day or hour; therefore all must watch and pray, and be ready, 32—37.

souls may be perfected, when wicked professors of Christianity shall be expelled and destroyed.

V. 13—27.

Wisdom, truth, and holiness, must excite opposition in this wicked world: for they are equally contrary to formal hypocrisy, proud infidelity, and the love of secular interest and preferment; and they therefore naturally cause a ferment and an effervescence, whenever they meet with them. But whilst men seek to entangle ministers in their words, let these copy the firmness, meekness, and prudence of the Lord Jesus; and endeavour to graft important instruction on insidious questions, and on frivolous or malignant objections. If professors of the Gospel conscientiously "rendered to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and to God the things that are God's," according to the exhortations of all faithful teachers; and if all who preach the Gospel approved themselves true men, no respecters of persons, but teachers of the way of God in truth, they would soon put to shame and silence the ignorant cavils of obstinate adversaries. For, though truth and holiness are most *offensive* to them, our errors and misconduct give them their most *plausible handle* against us. We should then study to "walk with wisdom to—wards them that are without," as well as to avoid hypocrisy, which is always known to our heart-searching Judge. Thus we may pass through this dying world, with a joyful hope of immortal happiness, and of a glorious resurrection, and may expect to be at length made *equal to the angels*; whilst Sadducees can only expect, at best, *to live and die like the beasts that perish*. We should then get acquainted with the Scripture, and endeavour to enlarge our apprehensions of the power of God; that we may be preserved from fatal errors, and have confidence in the God of Abraham and of all believers, as our everlasting Portion and Felicity; and that we may know how to answer every man in a conclusive manner, and to avoid all useless altercations, as well as to confute all vain objections.

V. 28—34.

By pertinent replies to one description of opposers, we may sometimes obtain a more candid hearing from others, who have hitherto been equally estranged from the truth; for we shall find some more teachable than the rest of those collective bodies to which they belong. A careful attention to the Scriptures will also convince us of the vast importance of a deep acquaintance with the spirituality, extent, reasonableness, and excellency of the moral law. Whilst therefore many are disputing about nice distinctions in speculative points, or external ceremonies and observances, we should peculiarly hearken to the sacred word, which calls us "to love the Lord our God with all our heart,

a Matt. xxiv. 1.
b Luke xxi. 5.
c Luke xxi. 20-22.
d viii. 6 x. 4 19.
e xii. 22, 23. Mat.
iii. 1, 2.

AND as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings, are here!

c 1 Kings ix. 7, 8.
2 Chr. vii. 20, 21.
Jer. xxvi. 18.
Mic. vi. 12 Mat.
xxiv. 2. Luke
xix. 41-44. xxi.
6. Acts vi. 14.
Rev. vi. 2.
d Matt. xxiv. 3.
e i. 16-19, v. 37.
f ix. 2 x. 25 xiv
33. John i. 40, 41.

2 And Jesus answering, said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, over against the temple, Peter,

and James, and John, and Andrew, asked him privately,

4 Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

5 And Jesus, answering them, began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you:

6 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

f iv. 34. Matt.
xxiv. 10, 36.
g Dan. xii. 6, 8.
h Luke xxi. 7.
John xxi. 21, 22.
Acts i. 6.
i Jer. xxix. 8.
Matt. xxiv. 4, 5.
1 Pet. i. 10.
Cic. de Nat. 33. Eph.
v. 6. Col. ii. 6.
2 Thes. i. 3. 1
John v. 43.
122. Jer. xiv. 14.
xxiii. 21-25.
John v. 43.
h 26. Matt. xxiv.
5 11 21 24 Acts
v. 36-39

“our mind, our soul, and strength,” and “to love our neighbours as ourselves.” Did we thus love the Lord with all our powers and faculties, and to the full extent of them; did we thus supremely admire and delight in his infinite excellencies; did we wholly desire his favour and love, as our felicity; were we thus filled with gratitude for his unspeakable goodness to us; and were we completely actuated by zeal for his glory, as in reason and justice we ought to be; what spiritual worshippers and devoted servants of God should we be! and in what should we differ from the inhabitants of heaven? Did we love our neighbours as ourselves, and in every thing seek their good, and value their comfort and happiness equally with our own, what perfect justice, truth, goodness, compassion, and peace, would every where prevail! (Luke x. 25-37.) This indeed would be far more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. But because we have not thus loved God and man; because our character and conduct have been, and are, (as far as we are left to ourselves,) the very reverse of this blessed temper and behaviour, therefore we are condemned sinners, we need repentance, and we need mercy, and the Saviour’s righteousness and atoning sacrifice; we cannot be justified by the works of the law, but must be “saved by grace,” by faith in Christ, and through the sanctification of his Spirit unto obedience. Yet, if we are really interested in this redemption, we shall love and obey these great commandments, as our perfect rule of duty, and daily mourn and be humbled, because our obedience to them is so very defective. Thus a just apprehension of the holy law, is generally the first step towards a spiritual understanding of the Gospel, and a proper use of its glorious truths: and though many, who contend for the doctrines of free salvation, might have been ready to reprobate the conviction of this Scribe as legal and self-righteous, we may easily perceive that our Lord, with perfect wisdom and propriety, allowed him to have answered discreetly, and declared that he was not far from the kingdom of heaven: and we may learn from his example to commend what is right, and to encourage what is hopeful, in those that differ from us, and are prejudiced against us.

V. 35-44.

With this view of the holy law, a serious recollection of its awful sanction, and a believing prospect of the approaching day of judgment, we shall be prepared to attend properly to what the Scriptures declare concerning the person

and offices of Christ; and shall be led more unreservedly to confess him to be “our Lord and our God;” to welcome him as “the End of the law for righteousness to every believer;” to obey him as our exalted Redeemer; and to rejoice that he is seated at the right hand of the Father, to perfect his people’s salvation, and to put all enemies under his feet. If the common people hear these things gladly, whilst the learned and distinguished in rank and authority oppose them, we may congratulate the former, however despised and neglected, and pity the latter, in the midst of their renown and splendour: for what will rich or long clothing, salutations in public assemblies, or chief rooms in synagogues and feasts, avail those that love such parade, when the Judge shall prove their devotions to have been the mask of impiety and iniquity, and sentence them to receive the deeper damnation? Of such persons and practices let all beware, who value their own souls. And let us not forget that Jesus still watches the treasury, to observe how much, and from what motives, men contribute to it. He approves of liberality in the rich; and they ought to appropriate a much greater proportion of their wealth to works of piety and charity, than they generally do; but it should be done in simplicity, and not out of pride and ostentation. And though their contributions should be encouraged, they ought not to be flattered into an opinion that they are meritorious, or that they will atone for their ungodliness or licentiousness, and prove a substitute for repentance, faith, and holiness. Nor should the poor on any account be discouraged or despised, in their humble endeavours to show the sincerity of their love; as their scanty oblations, spared from their hard-earned and scanty supply, and from such expenses as are generally deemed needful, are more honourable to God, more evident effects of the power of divine grace, and expressions of patient self-denial and reliance on providence, as well as by comparison a far greater bounty, than the applauded generosity of their superiors. Let then the poor contribute their mite to the relief of the distressed, or to promote the cause of God: and though men may deride or censure them, the Lord will approve and graciously recompense them. They will not be impoverished by what they lend in this manner to him; and their believing and thankful, though feeble, efforts to honour him, and to do good to their brethren, will be mentioned with commendation in that day, when all the splendid actions of unbelievers will be exposed to deserved contempt, as the result of pride, ostentation, enmity to God, and dislike to his holy and humbling salvation.

1 Ps. xlii. 1-3.
 2 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 3 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 4 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 5 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 6 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 7 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 8 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 9 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 10 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 11 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 12 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 13 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 14 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 15 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 16 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 17 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 18 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 19 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 20 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 21 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 22 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 23 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 24 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 25 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 26 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 27 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 28 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 29 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 30 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 31 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 32 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 33 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 34 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 35 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 36 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 37 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 38 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 39 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 40 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 41 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 42 Jer. vii. 1-10.
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 76 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 77 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 78 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 79 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 80 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 81 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 82 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 83 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 84 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 85 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 86 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 87 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 88 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 89 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 90 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 91 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 92 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 93 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 94 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 95 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 96 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 97 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 98 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 99 Jer. vii. 1-10.
 100 Jer. vii. 1-10.

7 And¹ when ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things^m must needs be; but the end shall not be yet.

8 For^a nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be earthquakes in divers places; and there shall be^o famines and troubles: ^o these are the beginnings of^o sorrows.

9 But^a take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake,^r for a testimony against them.

10 And^a the gospel must first be published among all nations.

11 But when they shall lead you,^r and deliver you up,^u take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate; but whatsoever^x shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak,^y but the Holy Ghost.

12 Now^z the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.

13 And^a ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake:^b but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14 ¶ But when ye shall see^c the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing^d where it

ought not,^e (let him that readeth understand,) ^f then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains:

15 And^g let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house:

16 And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment.

17 But^h woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days!

18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.

19 Forⁱ in those days shall be affliction, such as was not^j from the beginning of the creation which God created, unto this time, neither shall be.

20 And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but^k for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

21 And then,^l if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there: believe him not:

22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce,^m if it were possible, even the elect.

23 Butⁿ take ye heed: ^o behold, I have foretold you all things.

24 ¶ But^a in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light;

25 And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII. V. 1-3. (Notes, Matt. xxiv. 1-8. Luke xxi. 5. (Marg. Ref.) 'The disciples joined to gether the destruction of the temple with the last day of final judgment, as things which were to take place at the same time, not being fully instructed in the knowledge of these secret things; and this gave Christ the occasion of discoursing on both in conjunction.' (Beza.) All these. (4.) 'Thereby is signified the destruction of the temple, and, what was implied in that, the city and nation of the Jews, their whole government, civil and ecclesiastical.' (Hammond.) Troubles. (8.) The word signifies tumults, or commotions; such were excited by the persecuting Jews against the apostles, and by the malcontents against the Romans, which brought dire calamities on vast numbers, and at length ruin on the nation. (Luke xxi. 9.)

V. 9-13. (Notes, Matt. x. 16-22. xxiv. 9-14.) Peter and John were called before the Sanhedrim; James and Peter before Herod; and Paul before Nero, as well as before the Roman governors, Gallio, Felix, and Festus. (Doddridge.) (Marg. Ref.)

V. 14-23. (Notes, Matt. xxiv. 15-28.) Ought not. (14.) Jerusalem and all the adjacent country was holy ground, on which nothing that pertained to idolatry was allowed to approach. The elect's sake. (20.) (Note, Luke xxi. 24.) The Christians, who fled out of Judea when these calamities began, cannot here be meant, as the continuance of these desolating judgments on the Jews had no tendency to extirpate the Christians. That chosen seed, therefore, which was to arise out of the remnant of the Jews, in after ages, is evidently intended. (Notes, Is. vi. 13. lxx. 8-10.)

t. viii. 38. xiv. 62. Dan. vii. 13. 14. Matt. xvi. 27. xxiv. 30. xlv. 31. Act. i. 11. Thes. i. 7-10. Rev. i. 7.

26 And then shall they see^t the Son of man coming in the clouds, with great power and glory.

27 And then^a shall he send his angels, and^t shall gather together^a his elect from the four winds,^a from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

28 ¶ Now^y learn a parable of the fig-tree: When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near.

29 So ye, in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors.

30 Verily I say unto you,^a That this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

31^b Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

V. 24-31. (Notes, Matt. xxiv. 29-35. Luke xxi. 25-28. Marg. Ref.) Our Saviour seems to hold out the destruction of Jerusalem, which is his principal subject, as a type of the dissolution of the world. By thus judiciously mingling together these two important catastrophes, he gives at the same time, (as he does in many other instances,) a most interesting admonition to his immediate hearers, the Jews, and a most awful lesson to all his future disciples; and the benefit of his predictions, instead of being confined to one occasion, or one people, is by this admirable management extended to every subsequent period of time, and to the whole Christian world. (Bp. Porteus.)

V. 32. That day, which the Father alone knoweth, is not to be curiously inquired into; but care should be taken that it does not come upon us unawares. (Beza.) The son, &c. The precise season, either of the day of judgment, or of the destruction of Jerusalem, was no part of the revelation which the incarnate Son of God had received, to communicate to his Church; it was not made known to his human nature by the unction of the Holy Spirit. But we cannot understand many things that relate to the mysterious union of his divine and human nature, and should not further presume to pry into them. "The Son" is here considered as the prophet sent into the world to reveal the Father's will; and therefore, as delivering to the world, not what the Logos knew, but what the Spirit of God revealed to him. (John iii. 34, 35. v. 20. xii. 49. xiv. 10.) (Whitby.) "This he speaks in his human nature, and in his prophetic capacity. This point was not made known to him by the Spirit, nor was he commissioned to reveal it." (Bp. Porteus.)

V. 33-37. (Notes, &c. Matt. xxiv. 36-51. xxv. 14-30. Luke xix. 11-27.)

32 But^d of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven,^e neither the Son, but the Father.

33 Take^f ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

34 For the Son of man is^e as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants,^b and to every man his work,ⁱ and commanded^k the porter to watch.

35^l Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning;

36 Lest, coming suddenly,^m he find you sleeping.

37 And what I say unto you,^a I say unto all, Watch.

Prov. vi 6-11. xxiv. 33, 34. 1 Cor. iii. 1. v. 2. Is. lvi. 10. Matt. xxiv. 42-51. xxv. 5. 10. xvi. 34. xxi. 45. Rom. xiii. 11-14. Eph. v. 14. 1 Thes. v. 6. 7. n. Luke xii. 41-46.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-23.

When we behold the magnificence of flourishing cities and stately palaces or temples, we should recollect how soon they will all be desolated and come to nothing, through the sin of man; that we may be reminded how necessary it is for us to have a more permanent mansion in heaven, and to be prepared for it, by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. If we duly consider how soon all temporal things will pass away like an empty vision, we shall find our desires after wealth, grandeur, and prosperity, abated; and we shall be less disquieted on our own account, when we hear of wars, earthquakes, famines, and other dreadful judgments, however we may be concerned for and sympathize with the sufferers. Such reflections will tend to reconcile us to the thoughts of contempt, reproach, and persecution; but they will render us also more careful, that no man may deceive us, or draw us into error, to prevent our being partakers of Christ and the blessings of the Gospel. Indeed, we cannot profess and adorn his religion, without experiencing some effects of the world's hatred and scorn; but if we are wearied by our trivial difficulties, what should we be, if we were delivered up to councils and rulers, and treated by them with rage; or if we were betrayed by near-relations, and exposed to the sentence of death for our adherence to the truth? When the hatred of men and the fear of hardship and suffering cause us to shrink or complain, we should remember, that "he that continueth unto the end, the same shall be saved;" "but if any man draw back, the Lord will have no pleasure in him." It should comfort us under our trials for the sake of Jesus, to hope that our testimony to his truth, and our patience and meekness under the cross, may perhaps be of use, even to our persecutors or revilers; and assuredly our "light and momentary afflictions will work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

CHAP. XIV.

The chief priests and scribes conspire to put Christ to death. 1, 2. A woman pours precious ointment on his head. 3—9. Judas bargains to betray him, 10, 11. The disciples prepare the passover, 12—16. Jesus eats it with them, and points out the traitor, 17—21. He institutes the Lord's supper, 22—25. He foretells, that all the disciples would forsake him, and that Peter would deny him, 26—31. His agony and prayer in the garden, and his warnings to the disciples, 32—42. He is betrayed, apprehended, and forsaken, 43—52. He is arraigned before Caiaphas, condemned, and treated with indignity, 53—65.

Should any of us even be called to appear before the princes of this world in so good a cause, we ought not to be anxious about "what we should speak," or to premeditate in a distrustful and disquieting manner; for in such extraordinary cases we may expect peculiar assistance, and that the spirit of God will teach us to plead the cause of his truth with propriety. The enmity and pride of man's heart, when inflamed by religious bigotry and furious zeal, produce most fatal effects: this should put us upon our guard, and instruct us to pray for the Spirit of wisdom, truth, and love, to dwell in our hearts, and to counteract our natural depraved propensities, even in our religious pursuits and controversies. Indeed, when we consider that brethren, and even parents and children, are capable of hating, betraying, and murdering each other, and that the vilest abominations are often established even in the very sanctuary, we shall see more abundant cause to flee without delay for refuge to Christ, from our own sins, and those of others, and to renounce every earthly object, to secure the salvation of our souls. We should also deem every thing an *evil*, and pray against it, which tends to retard our course to heaven; for every unbeliever will soon be overtaken with such misery, as hath never been witnessed on earth "from the beginning of the creation, that God created, unto this time, neither shall be." In all things we ought to remember the Saviour's words; for as sure as the predictions which related to Jerusalem and the temple were exactly accomplished, so will all those things come to pass, which are written concerning the eternal happiness of the righteous, and the misery of the wicked, in another world.

V. 24—37.

Ere long "heaven and earth shall pass away," and all the things that we behold will be dissolved; but the "words of Christ shall not pass away." A firm belief of his truth will be our only preservative against those seducers, and our sure support under those trials, which will occasion the ruin of all—but the elect, whom God hath chosen." At

Peter's denial of him, and repentance, 66—72. (Note, Matt. xxvi. Luke xxii. John xiii.)

A^{FTER} two days was the feast of ^a the passover, and of unleavened bread: ^c and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him ^d by craft, and put him to death.

² But they said, ^e Not on the feast-day, ^f lest there be an uproar of the people.

³ ¶ And ^g being in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman, having an alabaster-box ^h of ointment of ⁱ spikenard, very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.

Matt. xxvi. 2.
Luke. xii. 1, 2.
John. xi. 55—57.
b. Ex. xii. 6—20.
1. Tim. xxi. 6—7.
Numb. xxi. 16
—20. Deut. xvi.
c. Ps. li. 1—5
John. xi. 47.
Acts. ii. 25—28.
d. Ps. li. 3. Numb.
4. 9. Lev. 24—26.
Matt. xxvi. 4.
e. Prov. xii. 21.
xvi. 30. 1. Tim.
iii. 37. Matt.
xxvi. 5.
f. xxi. 16. 22. Luke
xx. 6. John. vii.
50. 84. 19.
g. Matt. xxvi. 6.
7. John. xi. 2.
xii. 1—3.
h. Cant. iv. 13, 14.
i. 5. Luke vi.
37. &c.
* Or, pure nard,
or, liquid nard.

length we shall see "the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory," and then all his chosen people will be gathered from among the wicked into his heavenly kingdom. Instead therefore of curiously inquiring into the secret things which belong to the Lord, let us carefully improve the revelation of his will, by "giving diligence to make our calling and election sure." We know that the hour of our death cannot be very distant; our Lord, though not present to our sight, beholds our whole conduct, and will shortly come to call us to an account for it. To some of his professed servants he hath intrusted authority to preach his Gospel, to preside in his church, and to be his porters, for the admission of proper persons into sacred services and ordinances, and to exclude such as are unfit for them: and to every one of us he hath given his proper work, by attending to which we may approve ourselves true believers, and both honour our Lord and serve our generation. Happy therefore is that servant, who continues sober, vigilant, and diligent in his proper work, without interfering with that of other men! He will be prepared for the coming of his Lord, whenever that may be; he will be found awake, in his proper place, and employed in his service, and his gracious recompense will be secure. But it will be an awful surprise to a professed Christian or minister, should he be found sleeping, supine, self-indulgent, and unprepared, by his Lord at his coming; yet this will probably be the case, if at any time we relax our vigilance or neglect our work. He therefore speaks to us, and to all, and bids us to take heed to ourselves, to our duty, or our ministry, and to watch and pray always, "lest, coming suddenly, he should find us sleeping."

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV. V. 1, 2. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 3. (Notes, John xii. 1—8.) 'It appears to me more probable, that Matthew and Mark should have introduced this story a little out of its place; that Lazarus, if he made this feast, (which is not expressly said by John,) should have made use of Simon's house, as more convenient, and that Mary should have poured this oint-

1. E. 1. 4. Matt. xxvi. 1. 9. John xii. 4. 5.
 k. E. v. 4-8. k. Why was this waste of the ointment made?

5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred * pence, and ^a have been given to the poor. ^m And they murmured against her.

6 And Jesus said, ⁿ Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought ^a a good work on me.

7 For ^p ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: ^a but me ye have not always.

8 She ^r hath done what she could: ^s she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

9 Verily I say unto you, ^t Whosoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, ^{this} also that she hath done shall be spoken of, for ^a a memorial of her.

10 ¶ And * Judas Iscariot, ^v one of

the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.

11 And when they heard ^{it}, ^z they were glad, ^a and promised to give him money. And ^b he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

12 ¶ And ^c the first day of unleavened bread, when they [†] killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, ^d Where wilt thou that we go and prepare, that thou mayest eat the passover?

13 And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, ^e Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him.

14 And whersoever he shall go in, say ye to the good man of the house, ^f The Master saith, where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

15 And ^g he will shew you a large ^h upper-room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us.

16 And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, ⁱ and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

ment on Christ's head and body, as well as on his feet: than that, within the compass of four days, Christ should have been twice anointed with so costly a perfume; and that the same fault should be found with the action, and the same value set on the ointment, and the same words used in the presence of the woman, and all this in the presence of the same persons; all which particulars must be admitted, if the stories be as different. (Doddridge.) Neither Matthew, nor Mark, before the transaction when Jesus came to Bethany, evening before the Passover; they only relate it subsequent to some which took place at that time. It happened as at Bethany; and this may be explained to the Passover; and it was no doubt on the first he entered Jerusalem riding on the ass's pithet here given to the ointment, (*μύστικος*) is satisfactorily explained by any expositor. ^{it} liquid nard, others pure or unadulterated; suppose that a Syriac word, *pistaca*, answered to a word *spicata*, and denoted the manner in which the ointment was prepared from the spikes, or small aed plants which yielded it. Some think, that *adored brake* only means *shook*; supposing it that the alabaster box should be thus broken: the ointment was closed up in the vessel in which it was needful to break the top, or to get at it.

V. 8. ^{ry} "did what she could," to express her reverence, and gratitude, to Jesus; whom she regarded as her Lord and her Saviour; and to whom she con-

sidered herself as under the greatest possible obligations. But this is vastly different from the pretensions of many, that they do what they can, that is, "to establish their own righteousness," while they refuse to "submit to the righteousness of God."

V. 10, 11. It is not certain on which day Judas went to the chief priests; but it is most probable that it was two days before the passover, when they were consulting how to apprehend Jesus, that they might put him to death. The devil had before this "put it into his heart;" but it may be supposed that he hesitated for a time, before he carried his design into execution.

V. 12-16. (Note, Matt. xxvi. 17-19.) Nothing could be less the object of natural sagacity and foresight, than the events here mentioned. Had the two disciples come to the place specified rather sooner or later than they did, the man bearing the pitcher of water would either not have been arrived, or he would have been gone. But our Lord knew that the owner of a certain commodious house in Jerusalem favoured him; he foresaw that at a precise time of the day he would send his servant for a pitcher of water; that the disciples would meet him just when they entered the city; that by following him they would find out the person he intended; and that by mentioning him, as the Master, or Teacher, the owner of the house would readily consent to accommodate them in an upper chamber. When the disciples found all these circumstances so exactly to accord to the prediction, they could not but be deeply impressed with a conviction of their Lord's knowledge of every event, and his influence over every heart! (Notes, 1 Sam. x. 2-7.)

k Matt. xxvi. 20. Luke xxi. 14. 1 Matt. xxvi. 21. 19, 25. 10. 20. 11. vii. 12. ix. 1. 41. x. 15. 29. Matt. v. 10. vi. 2. 16. Luke ix. 24. xi. 51. John 1. 51. iii. 3. 5. 11. 24. 24. 25. vi. 26. 32. 47. xlii. 38. xxi. 18.

17 ¶ And ^k in the evening he cometh with the twelve.

18 And ^u as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, ^u Verily I say unto you, ^u One of you which eateth with me shall betray me.

19 And they began to be sorrowful, ^o and to say unto him, one by one, *Is it I?* and another said, *Is it I?*

20 And he answered and said unto them, ^u It is one of the twelve that ^u dipeth with me in the dish.

21 The Son of man indeed ^u goeth, as it is written of him: ^u but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! ^u good were it for that man if he had never been born.

22 ¶ And ^u as they did eat, Jesus took bread, ^u and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, ^u eat: ^u this is my body.

23 And he took the cup, and ^u when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: ^u and they all drank of it.

24 And he said unto them, ^u This is my blood of the new testament, ^u which is shed for many.

25 Verily I say unto you, ^u I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it ^u new in the kingdom of God.

26 ¶ And when they had ^u sung an hymn, ^u they went out into the mount of Olives.

27 And Jesus saith unto them, ^u All ye shall be offended because of me this night: ^u for it is written, I will smite the

Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

28 But ^u after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

29 But Peter said unto him, ^u Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.

30 And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That ^u this day, even in this night, ^u before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

31 But ^u he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. ^u Likewise also said they all.

32 ¶ And ^u they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, ^u while I shall pray.

33 And he taketh with him ^u Peter, and James, and John, ^u and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;

34 And saith unto them, ^u My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, ^u and watch.

35 And he went forward a little, ^u and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

36 And he said, ^u Abba, Father, ^u all things are possible unto thee; ^u but take away this cup from me: ^u nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.

37 And he cometh, ^u and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, ^u Simon, sleepest thou? ^u couldest not thou watch one hour?

¶ Matt. xxv. 5. xxi. 40. 1 Thes. v. 6. 8. — [Jer. xii. 5. Heb. xii. 5.]

V. 17.—30. (Marg. Ref.) *Fruit of the vine.* (25.) Thus our Lord calls the wine, after he had said, "This is my blood of the New Testament;" but this could not be according to the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation. —All Ye. (27.) "Christ foretelleth how he shall be forsaken of his, but yet that he will never forsake them." (Beza.) *Twice.* (30.) "After thou hast heard it once, thou shalt not be admonished; but before it crows a second time, thou shalt repeat the fault; nay, thou shalt do it thrice, and every time with new aggravations." (Doddridge.)

V. 31. *Vehemently, &c.* The circumstances of Peter's self-confidence and dreadful fall are related with peculiar energy by St. Mark, who is supposed to have written his Gospel under Peter's inspection; but those of his repentance are more slightly touched on.

V. 36. "O Father, I know that all things are possible

to thine almighty power. When I consult with human infirmity I could incline to wish the removal of this bitter passion; but these weak volitions are not now for me; I do, and shall, willingly submit my human will to thy divine will and pleasure." (Bp. Hall.) "Christ, suffering for us, in that flesh which he took upon him for our sakes, the horrible terrors of the curse of God, receive the cup at his Father's hands, which he, being just, doth straightway drink off for the unjust." (Beza.) —Abba. A Syriac word signifying Father, but in a way of peculiar affection and confidence. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 37. "Thou that didst even now express so much kindness and constancy to me, (31.) art thou unable to do so much less? In this state of agony, which I expressed to you that I was in, (34.) couldest thou be so little concerned, as to fall asleep when I stayed so little while from you?" (Hammond.)

33 Matt. xxix. 42. xxi. 43. xxi. 44. Luke xx. 41. xxi. 42. xxi. 43. xxi. 44. xxi. 45. xxi. 46. xxi. 47. xxi. 48. xxi. 49. xxi. 50. xxi. 51. xxi. 52. xxi. 53. xxi. 54. xxi. 55. xxi. 56. xxi. 57. xxi. 58. xxi. 59. xxi. 60. xxi. 61. xxi. 62. xxi. 63. xxi. 64. xxi. 65. xxi. 66. xxi. 67. xxi. 68. xxi. 69. xxi. 70. xxi. 71. xxi. 72. xxi. 73. xxi. 74. xxi. 75. xxi. 76. xxi. 77. xxi. 78. xxi. 79. xxi. 80. xxi. 81. xxi. 82. xxi. 83. xxi. 84. xxi. 85. xxi. 86. xxi. 87. xxi. 88. xxi. 89. xxi. 90. xxi. 91. xxi. 92. xxi. 93. xxi. 94. xxi. 95. xxi. 96. xxi. 97. xxi. 98. xxi. 99. xxi. 100.

33 Watch ye, and pray, lest ye enter into temptation: ^a the spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

39 And again ⁱ he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words.

40 And when he returned, he found them asleep again; (for their eyes were heavy;) ^a neither wist they what to answer him.

41 And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, ⁱ Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, ^m the hour is come; behold, ^a the Son of man is betrayed into the hand of sinners.

42 Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

43 ¶ And immediately, ^o while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, ^p and with him a great multitude, with swords and staves, from the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders.

44 And he that betrayed him had given them ^a a token, saying, ^r Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, ^a and lead him away safely.

45 And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, Master; and kissed him.

46 And ^a they laid their hands on him, and took him.

47 And ^a one of them that stood by, drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

48 And Jesus answered and said unto them, ^r Are you come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me?

49 I ^a was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: ^a but the scriptures must be fulfilled.

50 And ^b they all forsook him, and fled.

51 And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him.

52 And ^c he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

53 ¶ And ^d they led Jesus away to the high priest: ^e and with him were assembled all the chief priests, and the elders, and the scribes.

54 And ^f Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: ^h and he sat with the servants, ⁱ and warmed himself at the fire.

55 And the chief priests and all the council ^k sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; ⁱ and found none:

56 For many bare false witness against him; but their witness agreed not together.

57 And there arose certain, ^m and bare false witness against him, saying,

58 We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another ⁿ made without hands.

59 But ^o neither so did their witness agree together.

60 And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, ^p Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?

q Ex. 13. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

x. 15-18. 29. xii. 25. Matt. xxi. 23. 28. Luke xxi. 47. 48. xxi. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

V. 44. Take, &c. 'It is probable that Judas thought they could not do this; but that, as Jesus had at other times conveyed himself away, when they attempted to cast him down a precipice, (Luke iv. 30.) or to stone him, (John viii. 59. x. 39.) so he would have done now.' (Whitby.)

V. 43-50. 'As men had knowingly and willingly deserted their Creator, become traitors against him, and robbed him of his glory, so Christ, willingly making satisfaction for the unjust, being deserted by his disciples, and betrayed by one whom he had admitted to the most familiar acquaintance with him, is apprehended like a robber, that the punishment might answer to the sin, and we, the real traitors, deserters, and sacrilegious robbers, might be rescued from the snare of the devil.' (Beza.)

V. 51-52. It is probable, though not certain, that

this young man was one of Christ's followers; being, however, waked by the tumult, he seems to have left his bed, covered only with a shirt or sheet; and to have followed the company, either out of curiosity, or affection to Christ. He was therefore suspected to be a disciple, and the soldiers or servants attempted to lay hold on him, so that he was forced to flee away naked, to save his life. But though matters were conducted with such extreme violence, the apostles had been permitted to escape, through the secret influence of Jesus over the minds of those who apprehended him!

V. 56-59. Agreed. 'Their testimonies were not equal, to cause him to be put to death, not charging him with a crime which deserved death by the law.' (Whitby.) But perhaps one testified that he had said he was able to destroy the temple, &c.; and the other that

CHAP. XV.

Jesus is bound, and accused before Pilate, and continues silent, 1—5. Pilate, induced by the priests and people, releases Barabbas, and delivers Jesus to be crucified, 6—15. The soldiers crown him with thorns and cruelly mock him, and then lead him away to the place of crucifixion, 16—25. He is crucified between two thieves, and reviled by the

people and the priests, 26—32. The sun is darkened; and Jesus, calling on God, expires, 33—37. The veil of the temple is rent; and the centurion confesses him to be the Son of God, 38, 39. Certain women witness his crucifixion, 40, 41. Joseph of Arimathea, asks for the body, which he honourably interrs, 42—47. (Notes, Matt. xxvii. Luke xliii. John xix.)

conducted, and by hospitably entertaining his disciples; he will there also manifest his presence with us and bless us.

V. 17—42.



Whilst we consider the Lord Jesus, (the very paschal "Lamb," that was sacrificed for us, and who hath given his body to be broken, and his blood to be shed, that we might live by faith in his name,) as attending on these divine institutions, that he might fulfil all righteousness, let us learn, in copying his example, to beware of hypocrisy, and to fear being counted intruders, or detected as traitors. To be preserved from this we must shun avarice, and be diligent in self-examination; not trusting to our own hearts, but still inquiring, to beware of the guilt and misery of hypocrites and apostates, "Lord, is it I?" as more ready to suspect ourselves than any of our brethren. Let us thus examine ourselves; and then, as frequently as opportunity is afforded us, let us eat of that bread, and drink of that cup, which are the appointed symbols of the body and blood of Christ, which were given for us, to purchase the blessings of the new covenant for our perishing souls. Thus we shall frequently be led to recollect our guilt and danger, our hope and our obligations, and our profession of faith and love to our Redeemer and his ransomed flock: thus we shall receive renewed pledges of his love to us, and have our affections enlivened, and our strength increased, for his service: thus we shall anticipate the blessed hour, when we shall drink of the fruit of our living Vine, for ever new in the kingdom of God: and thus we shall also be prepared for bearing our cross, for drinking of the cup of tribulation, and for tasting death in our passage thither. But though the great Shepherd passed through his unspeakable sufferings without one false step, yet even the principal of his followers have often been offended and scattered by the comparatively small measure of afflictions allotted to them; and this hath been exactly proportioned to the degree in which they have confided in themselves, and formed their resolutions in their own strength. Did we indeed properly contemplate the scene exhibited in Gethsemane; did we duly consider the amazement and anguish of the great Redeemer, when "his soul" "was sorrowful even unto death," through the load of our guilt, which he willingly sustained; did we advert to his strong crying and tears, and to the victorious resignation of his heart, when he said, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt;" these reflections would fill our minds with such convictions concerning the evil of sin, the awful justice of God, the love of the Saviour, the vanity

of the world, the impotency of men's malice, and the danger and helpless condition of our souls, as would have a powerful effect in rendering us humble, dependent, thankful, and steadfast in the hour of trial; and in exciting us to watchfulness and prayer, lest we should be borne down by the force of temptation, or lest we should at last even fall under the insupportable wrath of God. But, alas! whilst unbelievers entirely disregard this interesting and affecting subject, even believers are apt to contemplate it in a drowsy manner; and instead of being ready to die with Christ, they are often unprepared to watch with him one hour! Thus, after repeated warnings, through their own negligence, they enter into temptation; and then, through the weakness of the flesh, they fall into sin, notwithstanding the readiness of the spirit in their better moments. But let us not pretend to excuse such folly, disobedience, and ingratitude: should Jesus call us to account for it, we should not know what to answer him; and though he will not cast off the true believer for these offences, he will yet rebuke and chasten him, and bring him to condemn himself on account of them.

V. 43—72.



There is a great difference between the general character of faulty disciples and that of hypocrites. These often prove traitors, and deliberately join the enemies of Christ in opposing his cause. Having long carried on a trade of iniquity under the mask of piety, and amid all the means of grace, they grow callous in sin, and handle all religious matters with an unfeeling familiarity; they conceal their crimes by attending on ordinances and sacraments; and, whilst they presumptuously call Christ their Lord and Master, and express great affection for him, they betray him into the hands of his implacable enemies. Thus they hasten their own destruction, and "it would have been better for them had they never been born." Whilst the enemies of Christ are actuated by the most outrageous malice, and seem to carry every thing their own way, they are under secret restraints, and can only fulfil the Scriptures: nor can they move any faster, or further, or touch one person more, than the Lord is pleased to permit them. The most enormous wickedness hath commonly been committed under the forms of law and justice, and varnished over by a semblance of piety; and whilst rulers have been ringleaders in the most aggravated perjury, venality, oppression and murder, they have often paused and perplexed themselves in devising how to regu-

CH. II. 2. Mark
XX. 1. 2. 3. 4.
Luk. XX. 1. 2. 3. 4.
Act. 1. 2. 3. 4.

CH. II. 1. Mark
XX. 1. 2. 3. 4.
Luk. XX. 1. 2. 3. 4.
Act. 1. 2. 3. 4.

CH. II. 1. Mark
XX. 1. 2. 3. 4.
Luk. XX. 1. 2. 3. 4.
Act. 1. 2. 3. 4.

CH. II. 1. Mark
XX. 1. 2. 3. 4.
Luk. XX. 1. 2. 3. 4.
Act. 1. 2. 3. 4.

CH. II. 1. Mark
XX. 1. 2. 3. 4.
Luk. XX. 1. 2. 3. 4.
Act. 1. 2. 3. 4.

CH. II. 1. Mark
XX. 1. 2. 3. 4.
Luk. XX. 1. 2. 3. 4.
Act. 1. 2. 3. 4.

CH. II. 1. Mark
XX. 1. 2. 3. 4.
Luk. XX. 1. 2. 3. 4.
Act. 1. 2. 3. 4.

AND straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.

2 And Pilate asked him, Art thou the king of the Jews? And he, answering, said unto him, Thou sayest it.

3 And the chief priests accused him of many things; but he answered nothing.

4 And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? I behold how many things thy witness against thee.

5 But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.

6 Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.

7 And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.

8 And the multitude, crying aloud, began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them.

9 But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

10 For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.

11 But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.

12 And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews?

13 And they cried out again, Crucify him.

14 Then Pilate said unto them, Why what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

15 And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

16 And the soldiers led him away into the hall called a Pretorium; and they call together the whole band.

late their conduct by statute and custom, and with the appearance of impartiality! Indeed, when we contemplate the whole body of the rulers and teachers of God's professed people combined against his holy and beloved Son, and determined at any rate to condemn him to death; and when we view him given up by them as a malefactor, to such insults and cruelties, as the vilest murderer would have been exempted from; we have the clearest demonstration of man's extreme enmity to God, and of God's most free and unspeakable love to man. In the conduct of our suffering Lord we see the brightest pattern of meekness, patience, fortitude, holiness, and compassion to sinners, that ever the earth witnessed: we here perceive likewise the desert of sin, the worth of our souls, the foundation of our hope, and the nature of our Christian calling; which is, to do good with unwearied perseverance, and to endure evil with fortitude, meekness, and patience, after the example of our gracious Saviour. Thus may we look forward with comfort to the time, when we "shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven;" and hope to be numbered with his victorious army of glorified saints, when all his persecutors and enemies will be driven away into everlasting destruction. But when we hear Peter, after all his promises and resolutions, denying his Lord with oaths and curses, we may well tremble to reflect on the weakness and depravity even of believers, if left to themselves; we may take occasion from the reflection to admire the mercy and patience of the Lord: we may be excited to thankfulness, that we have not yet been left

utterly to forsake him; and we may confess with shame our manifold instances of *partial* unfaithfulness. Finally, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall;" and let him that hath fallen, think of these things, and of his own offences, and return to the Lord with weeping and supplication; hoping to receive forgiveness, to be restored to the joy of God's salvation, and to be henceforth established by his free Spirit. (Notes, Ps. li. 7—13.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XV. V. 1—5. (Marg. Ref.) 'The Jews delivered up our Lord to the Romans; and they, for that sin, were themselves given up into the hands of the Romans.' (Theophylact.) 'Christ being publicly bound before the tribunal of an earthly judge, not for his own sins, as it appears out of the mouth of the judge himself, but for the crimes of us all, was condemned to the cross, that we, most guilty creatures, being freed from the penalty of our sins, might be publicly justified before the tribunal of God and the assembly of his angels.' (Beza.)

V. 7. Besides the vile character of Barabbas, as a robber, he had been guilty of the very crime of which the scribes and priests falsely accused Jesus; and had not only joined in, or headed, an insurrection against the Romans, but had committed murder in the attempt. Yet this man was preferred immensely before the holy Saviour! though the public demand, that such a criminal should be released, might have given great offence to Pilate, had he not perceived the envy and malice by which the priests and rulers were actuated.

x Matt. xxvii. 28

y John xxi. 1

z John xxi. 2

a John xxi. 3

b John xxi. 4

c John xxi. 5

d John xxi. 6

e John xxi. 7

f John xxi. 8

g John xxi. 9

h John xxi. 10

i John xxi. 11

j John xxi. 12

k John xxi. 13

l John xxi. 14

m John xxi. 15

n John xxi. 16

o John xxi. 17

p John xxi. 18

q John xxi. 19

r John xxi. 20

s John xxi. 21

t John xxi. 22

u John xxi. 23

v John xxi. 24

w John xxi. 25

x John xxi. 26

y John xxi. 27

z John xxi. 28

a John xxi. 29

b John xxi. 30

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19. 11-13. Mat.
xxv. 11-13.
xxv. 14-16.

22. 19. 23. 24.
John. xxi. 23-24.
25.

6. Mat. xxvii. 50.
Luke xx. 46.
John xxi. 20.

7. 21. 22. 23. 24.
Luke xxi. 25, 26.
2. Cor. x. 5.

11. 24. 25. 26.
xxv. 51-53. Luke.
xxv. 45. Heb.
19. 14. 16. v.
19. 18. 2-12. x.

19-23.
141. Mat. xii.
2-10. Acts. x.

1. 2. xxvii. 1.
3. 23.

8. Mat. xxvii. 43.
21. Luke xxvii.
47. 48.

17. 18. xxvii. 11.
Mat. xxvii. 53.
55. 1. c. xxvii.

49. John. xxi. 25.
-27.

10. xxi. 9. Mat.
xxvii. 1. Luke.

11. 12. 13. 14. 15.
vii. 2. John. xxi.

16. 17. xxi. 1. Mat.
xii. 55. xxvii.

55. 56. 57. John.
xvi. 23. 1. Cor.

18. 5. Gal. 1. 19.
Jan. 1. 1.

1. Luke xxi. 2, 3.

35 And some of them that stood by, and many other women which came up when they heard *it*, said, Behold, ^a he calleth Elias.

36 And one ran, ^a and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.

37 And ^a Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

38 And ^b the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom.

39 And when ^c the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, ^k he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

40 There were also ^l women looking on afar off; among whom was ^m Mary Magdalene, and ⁿ Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, ^o and Salome;

41 (Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ^p ministered unto him;)

42 ^q And now, ^r when the even was come, (because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath.)

43 Joseph of Arimathea, ^s an honourable counsellor, ^t which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, ^u and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

44 And Pilate ^v marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.

45 And when he knew *it* of the centurion, ^x he gave the body to Joseph.

46 And he bought fine linen, ^y and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, ^z and laid him in a sepulchre which was ^a hewn out of a rock, ^b and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

47 And ^c Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joses, beheld where he was laid.

q Matt xxvii. 57.
-58. Luke xxvii.
50-54.

r x 23-27.
s Luke ii. 25. 29.
xxv. 51.

t xiv. 54. 56, 57.
Matt. xix. 30.

u xx. 10. Acts. iv.
5-13. Phil. i.
14.

v John xix. 31-37.

x Matt. xxvii. 56.
John. xix. 39.

y Matt. xxvii. 59.
60. Luke xxiii.
53. John. xix. 38.

z 42.
2 Is. liii. 9.

a Is. xlii. 16.
b xxi. 3, 4. Matt.

xxvii. 60. xxviii.
2. John. xi. 38.

c d. xxi. 1. Mat.
xxvii. 61. xxviii.
1. Luke xxviii.
55. 56. xxiv. 1.
2.

V. 34-39. 'Christ, striving mightily with Satan, with sin, and with death, all armed with the dreadful curse of God; his body hanging on the cross, oppressed with exquisite tortures, and his soul sinking in the depths of hell, cries out with a loud voice: and though he had received a wound from death, as being for a time deprived of life; yet, by smiting both things above and things beneath, by rending the veil of the temple, and entering a testimony in his favour from his executioners, declares to his enemies, who still remained obstinate and mocked him, that he was speedily about to show himself a Conqueror, and the Lord of all.' (*Beza*.) It hath been supposed, that the vigour with which Jesus cried out just before he expired, (being contrary to what is generally observed in such cases,) tended to convince the centurion that he was the Son of God; but the confidence with which, in those circumstances, he openly addressed God as his Father, and committed his soul into his hands, seems to have had still greater influence in producing this conviction. (*Luke* xxiii. 46, 47.)

V. 43. *Honourable counsellor*. That is, a member of the sanhedrim, the highest council of the Jewish nation. Joseph "had not consented to the counsel and deed of them." (*Luke* xxiii. 51.) But, unless he had been one of the council, he would have had no opportunity of consenting to the counsel and deed of those who condemned Jesus, *Boldly*. 'Certainly the confidence of this man was very great; as by asking for the body of Jesus, he could not but openly oppose himself to all the Jews, and even to Pilate himself.' (*Beza*.)

V. 44. *And, &c.* Though Jesus hung six hours in torture on the cross, Pilate marvelled that he died so soon! His cure in ascertaining Christ's death, precluded those

objections which the Jews would otherwise doubtless have started against the reality of his resurrection, seeing his body was conceded for interment to his friends. We do not find that any, either of the rulers or people, ever pretended that he had not really been dead.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-26.

The sufferings of our meek and holy Redeemer are an inexhaustible source of instruction to the lively believer; and are a subject of which in his best hours he cannot be weary. The consideration, that no one was ever so universally hated, or so cruelly and contemptuously treated, by men of every rank, profession, or religion, as the only perfectly wise, holy, and excellent person that hath appeared on earth, leads the serious mind into such views of human depravity and enmity to God, as, being applied to himself by recollecting that such are we all by nature, tends exceedingly to humiliation before God: whilst a view of his stupendous love, in delivering up his well-beloved Son to this ignominious and cruel death, not sparing him, but making his soul a sacrifice for the sins of such rebels and enemies, must cause the broken heart to overflow with admiration and grateful joy. To believe that such an atonement was necessary, in order that a God of infinite mercy might honourably pardon sin and save sinners, cannot fail to give the mind the deepest impression of his justice and holiness, the excellency of the law which was thus magnified, and the evil of sin which was thus expiated: and it must at the same time destroy all expectation of being saved in any other way; for "if righteousness had come by the law, then Christ died in

CHAP. XVI.

An angel informs the women that Jesus is risen, 1—8. He appears to Mary Magdalene, 9—11; to two disciples going into the country, 12, 13; and to the eleven, whom he upbraids for their unbelief, and commissions to preach the Gospel to all the world, 14—18. He ascends into heaven, 19. The Gospel is every where

preached, and confirmed by miracles, 20.

AND^a when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought^c sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

2 And^d very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

^a 27. 32. Matt. xxviii. 1 Luke xxiii. 54. 56. xxiv. 1 John xiv. 11. 28. 1. b. xv. 47. Luke xxiv. 10. John xix. 25. c. 28. 3. 8. 2 Chr. xvi. 11. John xix. 40. d. 28. xxviii. 1. Luke xxiv. 1. John xxi. 1.

“vain.” The contemplation of the whole human species, however otherwise distinguished, as all lying under deserved condemnation, and exposed to everlasting misery, except as Jesus thus opened the gate of life and salvation to believers, must fill our minds with compassionate concern for all around us, and lead us to look upon the most prosperous sinners with a mixture of solemn awe and tender commiseration : at the same time it directly tends to crucify us unto the world, to reconcile us to its scorn and hatred, to mortify us to its friendship, interests, honours, or pleasures, to cure us of envy and competition, and to render us contented in poverty and obscurity. But with what earnestness will the man, that firmly believes these truths, seek an interest in this great salvation ! With what ardent gratitude will he receive the comfortable assurance, or even the dawning hope, of forgiveness and eternal life, as purchased for him by the sufferings and death of the incarnate Son of God ! And with what godly sorrow will he mourn over those sins, which he now looks on as having crucified the Lord of Glory ! Hence that attention to this one thing needful, which subordinates all other interests and employments : hence that devoted obedience to Christ, which neither danger nor suffering can move : hence that abhorrence of sin, which renders its indwelling, and occasional prevalency, the great burden of a believer’s life, and which induces him to the diligent use of every means, that may tend to weaken and destroy all evil out of his heart : hence that endeared affection to all those who love and resemble Christ ; that desire to recommend him to all around ; and that delight in speaking, hearing, or reading of him, and his love and suffering for sinners : and hence that love to enemies, that patience under afflictions, and that meekness under injuries and provocations, which distinguish the character of Christians from that of other men. The same views of Christ crucified gradually reconcile the believer to the thoughts of death, in order that he may behold, love, and praise, as he ought, that dear Saviour, who was wounded and pierced to save him from the wrath to come. Let us then frequently meditate on the interesting scenes, which have such a blessed efficacy in producing these holy and benevolent affections, and in forming our character into a conformity to Jesus, and a meekness for heaven : and let us especially adopt this method, when we are tempted to impatience under our trials, or peevishness under contempt and reproach ; or when we grow anxious or discontented about worldly things, or disposed to hanker after sinful indulgences.

V. 27—47.

The consideration of the silence, meekness, and patience

of the holy Jesus, amidst all his complicated sufferings, and the varied contempt and cruelty of his numerous enemies, must cause us to exclaim, “ Did Jesus thus suffer, and shall I, a vile sinner, fret, or repine ? shall I indulge resentment, or vent reproaches and menaces, because of troubles and injuries ?” With this object before us, we cannot think it too much to shed tears for those sins for which the Son of God shed his precious blood ; or to pour out our prayers for those blessings for which he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with malefactors ; or to bear hardship for him who bore the wrath of God for us. Indeed all we can suffer must be light, compared with his unknown agonies : yet how often are we “ weary and faint in our minds ;” instead of being thankful that we are not in the pit of destruction, as we justly might have been ! But did we more constantly contemplate these scenes, we should not only derive peace and comfort from the Saviour’s atoning blood, but we should also transcribe his character into our lives, and learn more to dread and hate all those evil dispositions which marked the conduct of his persecutors : and we should always find arguments, encouragements, and motives, to live to the glory of “ him who died for us and rose again.” We also ought to remember, that the hiding of God’s face from us is in itself more dreadful, than all that man can do unto us ; that we may learn to cry earnestly to him for help and comfort, when insulted and contemned by men. He will not forsake those that trust and call upon him : death, now deprived of his sting, will soon terminate the believer’s sorrows, as it did the Saviour’s : then the way into the holiest will be open to his soul, as it was before to his prayers, and he will be out of the reach of all enemies. His dying words and behaviour may leave a salutary impression on the minds of those who observe them ; his memory may perhaps be honoured by those who despised him when living ; the grave will be a quiet and sacred repository to his body till the joyful resurrection ; and thus he will be made “ more than conqueror, through him that loved him, and washed him from his sins in his own blood.” Lord, visit our souls with this salvation, and make us thankful for these thine inestimable gifts !

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI. V. 1. *Had bought.* Or “ who had bought,” that is, the evening before the sabbath. But some think that the women bought more spices, when the sabbath was ended, that is, after sunset.

V. 2. *They began their journey to see the sepulchre* while it was only twilight ; and they came to the

11. Take vii.
12. John i. 12.
13. 15, 16, 17.
14. v. 21 vi. 37
15. 20 vi. 37
16. 29 28. xii.
17. xii. 31 Acts
x. 43. xiii. 39.
18. xli. Rom. iii.
19. 24. Heb.
20. 30. 31 Pet.
21. 1 John v.
22. 13

K. Matt. xxi. 1.
19. Acts x. 38.
41. Am. 3. 2. 3.
20. 16 Rom. 9
x. 14. 1 Pet.
16. 21
22. 1 John. 1. 19. 36 vii. 21 xii. 37. 48
23. 15. xxi. 1. 12. — 11. Luke x. 17. Acts v. 16 vi. 7. xii. 16. xxi.
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36. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
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71. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
72. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
73. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
74. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
75. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
76. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
77. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
78. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
79. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
80. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
81. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
82. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
83. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
84. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
85. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
86. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
87. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
88. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
89. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
90. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
91. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
92. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
93. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
94. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
95. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
96. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
97. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
98. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
99. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.
100. 16. — 10. Acts ii. 1—11. 13. x. 46. xxi. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 29. 30. xiv. 5. 26.

16 He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with

new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it

shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

19 So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

they have since become such. On the other hand, unbelievers must be condemned; for they remain under the sentence of the holy law which they have broken; and they are also guilty of neglecting the salvation of the Gospel, and of despising all the divine perfections displayed in it, from pride of heart, self-will, enmity to God, and love of sin and the world. 'They who hence conclude that infants are not capable of baptism, must also hence conclude that they cannot be saved; faith being more expressly required to salvation, than to baptism.— In the second clause baptism is omitted; because it is not simply the want of baptism, but the contemptuous neglect of it, that makes men guilty of damnation; otherwise infants might be damned for the mistakes, or the profaneness, of their parents.' (Whitby.) (Note, John iii. 3.)

V. 17, 18. The Lord Jesus was about to be removed from his apostles, and they were sent forth into the world, to preach his Gospel in the face of opposition and persecution; but to encourage them in this arduous and perilous undertaking, he assured them of miraculous powers and protection. And not only so, but that when any believed on him through their word, they too would be endued with power from on high, enabling them to cast out devils, to speak with tongues, and take up serpents without being injured by them. And at a time when the art of poisoning was almost cultivated as a science, and it might be expected that their enemies would endeavour in this way to dispatch them, they were also assured, that if they drank any deadly thing it should not hurt them: and that they should be enabled to heal the sick, by laying on of hands, both for the comfort of their friends, and to demonstrate the truth of their doctrine. (Marg. Ref.) It is not said, that all who ever should believe would be enabled to work miracles, or that none, except those who had saving faith, would perform them. (Notes, Matt. vii. 22. 23. 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3.) but that these signs would follow them that believed, that is, would be seen among them.

V. 19, 20. We shall have a future opportunity of considering Christ's ascension and exaltation, and the ministry of the apostles. Wherever they went, the Lord, they risen, ascended, and exalted Saviour, wrought with them, both by the power of his Spirit upon the hearts of the people, and by confirming their word with signs following. The addition of the word, "Amen," may denote the Evangelist's earnest desire, that the same success might still attend the preaching of the Gospel in every place.

V. 14—16. If we understand this of our Lord's appearing to the apostles on the evening of the day on which he arose, Thomas was not present; but they might be called the eleven, that being the whole remaining number, though one of them was absent: or some other appearance of our Lord to them might be intended. At this time Jesus sharply rebuked them, yea, upbraided them, for their unbelief and hardness of heart. Their ambition and carnal prejudices had prevented them from being suitably affected and influenced by his predictions of his death, resurrection, and spiritual kingdom; and therefore they were so backward to believe the report of those, who had seen him after his resurrection. He, however, renewed his choice of them as his apostles, and commissioned them to "go into all the world, to preach his Gospel to every creature." Though they did not at this time understand the full import of these words, yet they certainly were an express commission to preach his salvation and kingdom to all the nations of the earth, and to rational creatures of every description and character, as far as they were able. They were authorized and commanded to propose the blessings of the Gospel indiscriminately to all who came in their way; inviting them to seek to Christ for them, and calling them to submit to his authority, as the subjects of his mediatorial kingdom. These things they were instructed to enforce, by promising salvation in its full extent to all that believed and were baptized; and by declaring the final and dreadful condemnation of all unbelievers, whatever their character in other respects might be. Doubtless we must understand this solemn declaration, of that true faith which receives Christ in all his characters and offices, and for all the purposes of salvation, and which produces a proper effect upon the heart and life; and not of a mere assent, a dead faith, which cannot profit. Baptism is both the outward sign of regeneration, and that profession of faith in Christ, which is required of all who embrace Christianity. (Note, Rom. x. 9, 10.) But if men truly believe in Christ, profess faith in him, and partake of his sanctifying Spirit, they will doubtless be saved, even should they have no opportunity of being baptized with water, or should they fall into any mistake about the external mode of administering that ordinance; and if men both believe and are baptized, it does not follow from the order of the words in the text, that the baptism was invalid because it is previous to believing; for no set of Christians rebaptize those, who have been baptized in their way, because it afterwards appears that they were not true believers at the time, though it be hoped

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—11.



When we put ourselves to trouble and expense, from love to Christ and to honour his name, we shall be accepted, though our endeavours should prove unsuccessful: and when we proceed in the path of duty as far as we can, those difficulties which we were ready to look upon as insurmountable, will often be removed by means of which we had no expectation. They whose hearts are right before God, may yet be greatly mistaken in their judgment and purposes; and they will often be disquieted, when they have abundant reason to rejoice. Indeed, they who believe, love, and seek Jesus who was crucified and is risen, should not give way to disconsolate sorrow, or gloomy fears. Evil men and apostate angels cannot hurt them; and holy angels are their faithful friends, and delight to minister to their comfort, because they are the objects of the Lord's special love and favour. Even after they have been overcome by temptation, and have acted inconsistently with their profession, the gracious Saviour will mingle encouragement with their humiliation, lest they "should be swallowed up of over-much sorrow;" and a trembling Peter shall be especially mentioned, that he may not be tempted to despondency. But, alas, how slowly do we admit the consolations which the word of God holds forth to us! and how hard is it to believe that the Lord will specially favour those over whom Satan hath heretofore peculiarly domineered. Yet he sometimes employs such trophies of his victory over the powers of darkness, to bear tidings of his complete salvation and abundant grace to those who mourn and weep, that the very example of the messenger may evince the truth of the message, and prove that Jesus liveth, and "is able to save to the utter—most, all them that come to God through him."

V. 12—20.



In whatever way the Lord is pleased to confirm his truth, our faith is apt to be weak and wavering: and therefore, whilst he comforts his people, by "manifesting

"himself to them as he doth not to the world;" he often sees it needful to rebuke and correct them for their hardness of heart, in distrusting his promises, as well as in not obeying his holy precepts. Yet he will heal the backslidings of his people, and love them freely, and again employ them in his service. The commission of Christ's ministers extends to every creature throughout the world; so that wherever a human being is found, we are expressly commanded to propose to him the Gospel of Christ, whatever reception he may give it. Our instructions likewise, as preachers of the Gospel, contain not only truths, promises, encouragements, and precepts, but also most awful warnings and sanctions: so that we as much preach the Gospel, when we declare, in God's name, that "he who believeth not shall be damned," as when we proclaim, that whosoever believeth in Jesus shall be saved. However men may now despise, or dispute against, such solemn denunciations, or deride and revile those who insist on them, they will doubtless be fulfilled, in their most tremendous meaning, upon all who hear and reject the Gospel. We do not now pretend to work miracles in confirmation of our message; but the Scriptures are irrefragably proved to be of divine original; and this will render all those inexcusable who despise or neglect them. Their effects also, where faithfully preached and truly believed, in changing the tempers, characters, and conversation of mankind, form a constant proof, that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation: and, indeed, they who truly believe in Christ will be defended against, and made victorious over, all the assaults of the serpent and his seed; and be preserved from the fatal effects of those poisonous and dreadful heresies, which he is continually propagating in the world. May then our ascended and glorified Redeemer send forth many faithful ministers every where, to preach his Gospel; and may he work with them, and confirm his word by signs following; even "by opening men's eyes, and by turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among all them that are sanctified by faith in him." Amen.

THE GOSPEL

ACCORDING TO

ST. LUKE.

THIS evangelist was the companion of the apostle Paul, in all his labours and sufferings; during many years, probably till he suffered martyrdom:—(Acts xvi. 10. xxvii. 1, 2. xxviii. 7—10. Col. iv. 14. 2 Tim. iv. 11. Philem. 21.) As he wrote the Acts of the apostles also, which conclude with a brief account of St. Paul's imprisonment at Rome: we may be sure, that he had the apostle's sanction to what he did; and we may infer with great probability, that this Gospel was written some time before that event.—It certainly was extant at an early period, and was from the first received by the Church as of divine authority. (Introduction to the New Testament.)—It is not certainly known, of what country St. Luke originally was, or when he was converted to Christianity. He never once mentions himself, except as he uses the first person plural, when writing several parts of St. Paul's history: and nothing is recorded of him, till we find him among the companions of that apostle: for, Lucius of Cyrene seems to have been another person. (Acts xiii. 1.) Origen and Epiphanius say that he was one of the seventy disciples: and, in that case he must have been an eye-witness of many of the transactions which he records; yet he seems to say the contrary. (Note, i. 4.) The more general tradition, however, is, that he was a Syrian, and that he first became acquainted with Christianity at Antioch.—He is called by St. Paul, “the beloved Physician;” and some report, that he had practised in this profession at Rome, having been taken thither for that purpose. It is known, that the physicians among the Romans were the servants of their great men; and it is thought, that having been rewarded with his liberty, he received a name from his patron, as was often the case, (and his name seems to be of Roman original,) and then, returning to Antioch in Syria, he became acquainted with St. Paul, embraced Christianity, was appointed to the ministry, and from that time attended the apostle in his travels. But as St. Paul never calls him “his son,” as he does Timothy and Titus, it is probable that he was previously converted.—It is also uncertain, whether he were a Jew by birth, a proselyte, or a gentile convert. The language of St. Paul seems to favour the latter opinion: for, having mentioned several persons, who saluted the Colossians, he adds; “Who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort to me.” Yet he directly speaks in high terms of Epaphras, and calls “Luke the beloved physician;” and as he could not mean to say, that these persons had not been a comfort to him, it seems to follow, that they were not of the circumcision. (Col. iv. 9—14.) It is indeed a general opinion, that none of the sacred books of the New Testament were written by gentile converts, however eminent many of them were, as preachers of the Gospel. But the Scripture lays down no rule of that kind: it is probable that the book of Job was written by Elihu, who was not of the nation of Israel; and certainly Nebuchadnezzar wrote the fourth chapter of Daniel.—The sanction of the apostle, and the early and unanimous reception of St. Luke's writings, as divinely inspired, and a part of the canon of Scripture, are alone sufficient to satisfy any reasonable person: and it is remarkable, that in recording our Lord's words, when he foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, he adds some particulars, not expressly mentioned in the other Gospels, which, taken with the extraordinary accomplishment of them during above seventeen hundred years, form an internal demonstration, that he wrote “as he was moved by the Holy Ghost.” (Note, xxi. 24.)—This Gospel contains many parables, discourses, miracles, and events, which had been omitted by the preceding evangelists, and several recorded by them, are here passed over. The history begins, with the circumstances preceding and attending the birth of John Baptist, and that of Jesus himself; and it closes with a fuller account of what passed between our

Lord's resurrection and ascension, than *Matthew* or *Mark* had given.—*St. Luke* is supposed to have been a man of learning, previous to his being endued with spiritual gifts. His style is more pure and classical than that of the other evangelists: though not quite free from the Hebrew or Syriac idiom; but the simplicity of the manner, in which he sets before the mind, as in a picture, the wonderful events which he records; and the talent which he manifests of fixing the attention and exciting the affections of his readers, by the most artless narrative, is so exquisite, that many have thought him, as a writer, capable of standing the competition with the most celebrated historians of Greece itself. (Note, vii. 11—17.)

CHAP. I.

The preface, and dedication to Theophilus, 1—4. An account of Zacharias and Elisabeth, 5—7. The angel Gabriel appears to Zacharias in the temple, and promises him a son in his old age, who would be eminent and useful, 8—17. He is chastised for unbelief, by being struck dumb, 18—23. Elisabeth conceives, and hides herself, 24, 25. The angel appears to the virgin Mary, and assures her that she should become the mother of the Messiah, the King of Israel, by the power of the Holy Spirit, 26—33. Her humble faith and acquiescence, 34—38. She visits Elisabeth; is saluted by her; and prophesies, and praises God, 39—56. The birth, circumcision, and naming of John Baptist,

57—63. *Zacharias, restored to the use of speech, prophetically praises God, 64—79. The manner, in which John spent his youth, 80.*

FORASMUCH as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of ^a those things which are most surely believed among us,

2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were ^b eye-witnesses, ^c and ministers of the word;

3 It ^d seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee ^e in order, ^f most excellent Theophilus,

4 That thou ^g mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

a John xx. 31.
Acts i. 1—3.
1 Tim. iii. 16.
2 Pet. i. 16—19.
b xxiv. 48. John xv. 27. Acts i. 3. 8. 21. 22. iv. 20. x. 39—41.
Heb. ii. 3.
1 John i. 1—3.
c Acts xxvi. 16.
Rom. xv. 16.
Eph. iii. 7. 8.
Col. i. 23—25.
d Acts xv. 19. 25.
26. 1 Cor. vii. 40. xvi. 12.
e 2. 19. xl. 5. 1.
21. Ec. xii. 9.
Acts xii. 4.
f Acts i. xxiii. 26. xxiv. 3.
xxvi. 25. Gr.
g John xx. 31.
2 Pet. i. 13, 16.

NOTES.

CHAP. I. V. 1—4. *Matthew* and *Mark* are supposed to have written before *Luke*; but they could not be called *many*: and the former of them at least wrote from his personal knowledge, as well as under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; while the persons here mentioned had written from report. We must therefore understand the evangelist, of some compilations that have long been lost, yet the persons who made them seem to have meant honestly; and those heretical Gospels, which were propagated during the primitive times, were not intended. We hence, however, learn that several persons had undertaken to publish orderly narratives of those things, which were most surely believed by Christians, or most fully proved to them, as having been really spoken and done; for the expression may be explained either of the evidence by which they were attested, or the assurance with which they were credited. These writers had collected their information from the testimony of those, who had from the first been eye-witnesses of Christ's miracles, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, and who were ministers of the Gospel to declare them unto others; the apostles seem especially intended. But these histories had not been compiled with sufficient accuracy, and the evangelist was led to consider it as a service allotted him, to form a more exact and regular work of this kind; as he had accurately in-

vestigated the subject, and acquired a complete acquaintance with it, from the beginning of the Gospel, in the conception and birth of John the Baptist. The word rendered "from the beginning" sometimes signifies *from above*; and some suppose, that *St. Luke* intended to intimate that he had his information from God by immediate inspiration. We can indeed entertain no doubt, but that he wrote under the *superintending* inspiration of the Holy Spirit, yet it does not seem that much stress can be laid upon this word, which is often used in another sense; nor is it necessary to contend, that he had his knowledge from above, without the intervention of means or ordinary methods of information. This history he addressed to *Theophilus*, for his more full instruction in Christianity. *Theophilus* signifies, a *lover of God*: he appears to have been a person of rank and authority; for the title, "Most excellent," is the same in the original, that is elsewhere addressed to the Roman governors. (*Marg. Ref.*) The title was given to *Theophilus* with greater propriety: but *St. Paul's* using it to *Felix* and *Festus* more fully proves, that Christianity does not forbid us to give this kind of customary honour to persons in authority, whatever their character or religion may be. The word rendered *instructed* signifies *catechized*, and relates to the initiatory instruction in the first principles of Christianity, in which the converts were afterwards to be more fully taught and

xxvi 16-19. xxvii. 11. Heb. ix 6-7 ——— s. Lev. xvi 17. Heb. iv.
Rev viii. 3, 4 ——— t. 19. 28 ii. 10. Judg. xiii 3-9 Acts x 3, 4. Heb.

xi. 18. *z* *z*ech x. 15 Acts ii. 14-18 Eph. v. 18 — *g* Ps. xxi. 9
h. 76. Is. xl. 3-5. xlix. 6 D. ii. xii. 3. Matt. xiii. 1-6
John i. 16-23 — *o* xxi. 20 — *h* Mal. iv. 5 Matt. xii. 1 xxi. 11, 12
John i. 21-24 Rev. xx. 4 — *l* Kings xii. i xviii 16 xxi. 20
Elijah Matt. xiii. 4 7-12 xiv. 4 — *m* Job. 7-14 Mal. iv. 6 —
xi. 23-32 *n* Cor. iv. 9-11 — *o* *R*. *o* *b*y — *o* 1 Sam. vii. 3 1 Cr.
xxix. 26 Ps. x 17 lxxviii 8 Am. iv. 12 Acts x. 33. Rom. ix. 23.
xi. 21. 2 Pet. xiii. 11-14 1 John ii. 2 .

V. 11-17. Whilst Zacharias was officiating within the sanctuary, he was surprised by the appearance of an angel, probably in a splendid form, at the right hand of

18 And Zacharias said unto the angel,
p. 51. Gen. xv. 8. xvii. 17. xxi. 12. Judg. vi. 36-40. Is. xlviii. 22. Jer. i. 7. Num. xi. 21. 2 Kings vi. 2. Rom. iv. 19-21.
 "Whereby shall I know this? ^a for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

19 And the angel answering, said unto him, ^a I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, ^a and to shew thee these glad tidings.

20 And, behold, ^a thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, ^a because thou believest not my words, ^x which shall be fulfilled in their season.

21 And the people ^y waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

22 And when he came out he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple; for ^a he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

23 And it came to pass, that as soon as ^a the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

25 Thus ^b hath the Lord dealt with

the altar of incense. This greatly alarmed him, though he was a man of approved piety: but the angel, in an encouraging manner, bade him not be afraid, for he was come to assure him that his prayers were heard and answered. Zacharias and Elisabeth had doubtless often prayed for children; but we may suppose, that they had for some time given up the hope of having any, had submitted to the will of God, and concluded that these prayers would not be answered. The angel's words, however, may refer to the prayers which Zacharias had then been offering up, in behalf of himself and his people, and for the coming of the promised Redeemer: or in general his prayers were accepted, and would all in due season be answered. As a proof of this, his wife Elisabeth, even in her old age, would bear him a son, whose name he would call John, which signifies *the grace of God*: for he would be an honour and blessing to him, a gracious answer to his prayers, and a pledge of the divine favour: so that he would have great joy and gladness in him; and many would rejoice at his birth, as anticipating the great usefulness of his future life. For though he would be a plain man, and appear mean in his person and attire, yet he would be great in the sight of the Lord, and according to his estimation of characters; being eminent for wisdom and piety, and a blessed instrument in glorifying God and doing good to men. As a token of his entire devotedness to God, he would be a perpetual Nazarite from his birth, (*Notes, &c. Num. vi.*) and be likewise "filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb." Though conceived in sin like other men, yet a saving change would be wrought in his heart by the spirit of God; even at, or before, his birth, which would appear in his eminent wisdom and piety from his earliest youth. In due time he would be brought forth as a zealous preacher and a successful reformer, in converting many of the descendants of Israel from their hypocrisy, impiety, or infidelity, to the true worship and service of the Lord their God: and he would go before HIM, in the spirit and power of Elijah, with intrepidity, zeal, sanctity, and a mind mortified to all earthly interests and pleasures, like that illustrious prophet. Thus he would turn the "hearts of the fathers with the children," or persons of every age and situation in society, to lay aside their party disputes or

domestic contests, and to unite in repenting of sin and attending to the great duties of true religion. (*Note, Mal. iv. 5, 6.*) The disobedient and rebellious would thus be brought back to the wisdom of their righteous progenitors, or rather induced to attend to the wisdom of that Just One, who was coming among them; that they might become a people, prepared, by humiliation and genuine repentance, to welcome the salvation, and become the subjects, of the LORD, even of Jesus Christ. John went before Christ, as his forerunner, to prepare the people for him; yet **THE LORD THEIR GOD** is the antecedent to the pronoun "Him," before whom John was to go: so that the angel's address was evidently calculated to induce the belief, that Christ was the Lord God of Israel; and must have been improper, and suited to mislead us, on any other supposition. (76.) "John, in Hebrew *Johanan*, which occurs nearly thirty times in the Old Testament, is derived from **JEHOVAH and Chen**, and properly signifies *the grace and favour of the Lord.*" (*Doddridge.*)

V. 13—20. When the angel had delivered this gracious message, Zacharias, reflecting upon the great improbability of having a son by his wife in their old age, and not duly considering the power of God, "staggered at the promise through unbelief." He therefore required some further sign, by which he might know that this would be performed: whereas the very appearance of the angel, whose presence had so alarmed him, was a sufficient sign that the promise sent by him would be accomplished. The angel therefore informed him, that he was Gabriel, who stood before, and ministered unto God, and of whom he must have read in the prophecy of Daniel, (*Marg. Ref.*) and that he was sent from heaven on purpose to declare to him these glad tidings. But as he had doubted the truth of his words, and had demanded a sign in confirmation of them, notwithstanding that so many eminent persons had been born of parents who had long been childless, (as Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samson, and Samuel,) a sign would be given him, which would at the same time be a rebuke of his unbelief: for he would thenceforth be no more able to speak, till the promise had received its accomplishment; yet that would certainly take place in its appointed season.

p. 51. Gen. xv. 8. xvii. 17. xxi. 12. Judg. vi. 36-40. Is. xlviii. 22. Jer. i. 7. Num. xi. 21. 2 Kings vi. 2. Rom. iv. 19-21.

26. Dan. viii. 16. ix. 21. Matt. xviii. 10. Heb. i. 14.

12. 62. 63. Ex. ix. 11. Rev. iii. 22. Num. xii. 2. 19. 20. 16. vii. 9. Mark x. 19. xvi. 14. Rev. iii. 19.

16. Rom. iii. 3. 2. Tim. ii. 13. 7. 11. 2. Heb. x. 18.

Num. vi. 23-27.

2. 2 Kings xi. 5-7. 1 Chr. xi. 25.

b. 13. Gen. xxi. 1. 2. xxv. 21. xxv. 22. 1. 2. 1. 19. 20. 11. 21. 22. Heb. xi. 11.

2. 2 Kings xi. 24. Act. xxi. 17. xii. 40.

me, in the days wherein he looked on
me, ° to take away my reproach among
men.

26 ¶ And in ^d the sixth month
the angel Gabriel was sent from God
unto ^e a city of Galilee, named Naza-
reth,

27 To a virgin espoused to a man,
whose name was Joseph, of the house
of David; and the virgin's name was
Mary.

28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, ^h Hail, thou *that art* * highly favoured, ⁱ the Lord *is* with thee: ^k blessed art thou among women.

29 And when she saw *him*, ^l she was troubled at his saying, ^m and cast in her

mind ^a what manner of salutation this should be.

30 And the angel said unto her, ° Fear not, Mary : for thou hast found favour with God.

31 And, behold, ^p thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, ^q and shalt call his name JESUS.

32 He ^r shall be great, and shall be
called ^s The Son of the Highest: and
the Lord God shall ^t give unto him the
throne of his father David:

33 And ^u he shall reign over ^s the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

22-24 xxxiv 23, 24. xxxvii 24, 25. Amos vii 11, 12. Matt xxvi
26 v 21-29 xlii 34. Acts ii. 30 36. Eph i 20-23. Rev i 7-
lxviii 35-37. Dan ii. 44 vii. 13, 14. 27 Ob. 21. Mic. iv. 7. 1 Cor
8. Rev xi. 15. xx. 4-6. xxii. 3-5. —x Rom. ix 6. Gal iii 23

e Gen. xxx. 21.
1 Sam. i. 6. Is.
iv. i. liv. 1-4.
d 19
e 19
f 1. 4. Matt.
23. John. i. 45.
46. vi. 47, 48.
g 1. 1. Matt.
iii. 15. 13. vi.
1a Jer. xxxi. 22.
Matt. i. 18. 23.
b Dan. ix. 21-
23. 12. 19.
* Or, graciously
accepted, or
mercifully granted.
Hos. xiv. 2.
c Eph. i. 6.
d Judg. vi. 12. Is.
xliii. 5. Jer. i.
2. 19. Act.
xviii. 10.
e 12. xi. 27, 28.
Judg. v. 21.
Prov. xxxi. 2.
- 31. Matt. xii.
13-50.
f 12. Mark. vi. 43.
50. xvi. 5, 6.
Acts x. 13.
g 16. 19, 51.

n Judg vi 13-15.
1 Sam ix 20, 24.
A 13 x 4 17.
13 xiii 22 Is
xh. 10 14 xliii.
1-4. xlv. 1.
Matt xxviii. 5.
Acts xviii 9, 10.
xxvii 21. Rom.
viii. 31, 32.
Heb xii 6.
p 27. Is. vii. 14.
Matt i. 21.
Gal. iv 4.
q 13 ii 21. Matt.
i 21, 25.
r 15 ii 16. Matt.
xii 9-12.
Phil ii xii 41.
s 39. Mark v. 7.
xiv 61. John
vi 69. Acts xvi
17. Rom. i 4.
Heb. i 2-6.
t 2 Sam vii 12.
13 Is xxxix.
u 11 Is c. 6.
xvi 5. Jer xxxix.
v 8. Exxlii. 15.
17. Eccl. xxi.
ii 12. Ps lxxv.
10. Ps xlv.
xv. 24. 25. Heb i.
xi. 10. Phil ii.

V. 21—25. The interview between the angel and Zacharias, as here related, would not take up much time: but it must have been because the mind of Zacharias was occupied and agitated by a variety of reflections and emotions, so that he continued in the temple a considerable time after the angel had left him, probably employed in devotion. In the mean while the people waited for him, to dismiss them with the customary blessing, (*Note, Num. vi. 23—26:*) being surprised on what account he continued so long in the temple: but when he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they perceived by his signs that he had seen a vision. Thus he remained speechless, or deaf and dumb, (for the word implies both, and this was doubtless the case with him.) (v. 61—63.) He was, however, able to burn incense according to his office, and he continued at the temple, till the time of his appointed ministration was expired, when he returned to his own house: and soon after, Elisabeth, finding herself pregnant, “hid her- self five months.” She kept at home and much alone, either that she might be preserved from contracting any ceremonial defilement, as the child to be born of her was to be a perpetual Nazarite; or that she might not seem to be lifted up with the favour conferred on her; or rather that she might have the more leisure for meditation, prayer, and thanksgiving, on this extraordinary occasion. For she observed, as in a limitation, that *this*, in so unexpected a way of grace and favour, *the Lord had dealt with her*, at the time when he was pleased to take away the reproach of barrenness, under which she had hitherto lain among her neighbours and acquaintance; in that he had promised to make her in so marvellous a way the mother of a son, of whom such great things had been spoken! Doubtless Zacharias had by writing made known to her the purport of the angel’s message. The time of her close retirement continued five months, for in the sixth Mary went to visit her: yet it is probable she lived much at home and alone during the whole of her pregnancy.

V. 26-33. The evangelist next proceeds to relate the miraculous conception of Jesus. In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to Nazareth, to the Virgin Mary, whose espousals to

Joseph have already been considered; (*Notes, Matt. i. 18—25.*) It is remarkable that the name *Elisabeth* was the same with *Elisheba*, the wife of Aaron; and that of *Mary*, the same with that of *Miriam*, his sister. (*Ex. vi. 23. xv. 20, 21.*) When the angel came to Mary in her retirement, (probably in a glorious form,) he addressed her by saying, “Hail, thou that art highly favoured of the Lord &c.” That is, “Rejoice on, account of the honour in- tended thee, and on which I now congratulate thee; for thou art highly favoured of the Lord, not only as an accepted believer, but as the mother of the long expected Messiah: the Lord is therefore with thee in a special manner, and in this respect thou art happy above other women, and distinguished from them all.” The Papists have unaccountably turned this salutation of the angel into an act of adoration; and, translating the word “highly favoured,” *full of grace*, they have thus addressed the Virgin Mary with idolatrous worship, and numbers do so to this day: nay, this act of devotion, such as it is, often precludes the use of the Lord’s prayer, or of any other prayer to God, or at least is far more frequently repeated than any other! But there is no expression in this address, but what might properly be used by a superior to an inferior, in Mary’s situation, and doubtless it was thus intended; for a greater absurdity can scarcely be devised, than to suppose that the angel Gabriel came down from heaven to worship a poor sinful mortal here on earth, as Mary very well knew herself to be. This extraordinary appearance and salutation disquieted her mind: she was not only alarmed at the angel’s presence, but was greatly perplexed about the meaning and consequences of so uncommon an address. But the angel calmed her fears, and assured her, that she had found favour with God, and would shortly conceive and bear a Son, whom she was directed to call *Jesús*. He would be great, above all that ever appeared on earth, being called, or acknowledged to be, “the Son of the Highest;” as being one in nature and perfection with the “Lord God,” who would in due time exalt him, in his mediatorial character, to the throne of David, whose descendant he would be as to his human nature: and on that throne he would reign ever-

31 Then said Mary unto the angel,
5 Juch xlii 8—
12 Act ix. 6. How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, ^aThe Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also ^athat holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called ^bThe Son of God.
27. 31 Matt. i. 20.
a Joh xiv. 4. xvi. 16. xxv. 4 Ps. li. 5 Eph ii. 3. Heb. iv. 15. vii. 26—28.
b 32. Ps ii. 7. Matt. xiv. 33. i. 1. John i. 31. 49 xx. 31. Acts viii. 37. Rom. i. 4 Gal ii. 20. c 21—26.
d xviii. 27. Gen. xlviii. 14 Num. xi. 23 Joh xlii. 2. Joh xlviii. 17. 27. Zech vii. 6. Matt. xix. 26. Mark x. 27. Phil. ii. 21. e 2 Sam vii. 25—29. Rom. iv. 20. 21.

36 And, behold, ^cthy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.

37 For ^dwith God nothing shall be impossible.

38 And Mary said, ^eBehold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

39 ¶ And Mary arose in those days,

the house of Jacob, the true Israel of God, not only for a few years, as David and his successors had done, but for ever; so that of his kingdom there should be no end. (Notes, Ps. ii. 6—9. lxxxix. 19—37. Is. ix. 6, 7. Dan. vii. 13, 14.)

V. 34—38. Mary's question seems to have been entirely the language of faith and humble admiration. She probably meant to inquire of the angel what her conduct ought to be respecting her espousals with Joseph, and in what way she was to expect the accomplishment of the extraordinary promise. (Note, Judges xiii. 8—14.) She seems to have understood it as implying, that she was to conceive miraculously, continuing still a virgin; but she might desire further information: she, however, asked no sign for the confirmation of her faith, as Zacharias had done. The angel therefore answered without any mixture of reproof, and told her that she would conceive by the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit descending upon her: in this manner the power of the Most High would overshadow her, and the Infant would be formed in her womb by his creating energy, and under his special protection. Thus the promised Seed would properly be "made of woman," and partaker of human nature, without the pollution of sin, which is common to all others descended from fallen Adam. (Marg. Ref.) This child might therefore be called, *that holy thing*; and even in respect of *his human nature*, he should be acknowledged to be the Son of God, as well as in his divine nature, and, his mysterious Person as "God manifest in the flesh." The Man Christ Jesus being called the Son of God, because conceived by the operation of the Holy Spirit, is a full proof of the Deity of that sacred Agent. In order more fully to establish Mary in her believing expectation of this great event, the angel informed her of Elisabeth's having conceived a son in her old age, and being at that time in the sixth month of her pregnancy, though she

and went ^finto the hill-country with haste, into a city of Judah;
f Josh. x. 40 xv. 48—50. xxi. 3—11.

40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.

41 And it came to pass, that when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, ^gthe babe leaped in her womb: and Elisabeth ^hwas filled with the Holy Ghost.

42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, ⁱBlessed art thou among women, and ^kblessed is the fruit of thy womb.

43 And ^lwhence is this to me, that the mother of ^mmy Lord should come to me?

44 For lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, ⁿthe babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45 And ^oblessed is she ^{*}that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

had been deemed incapable of bearing children during her younger years! Elisabeth was cousin to Mary by the mother's side, though a daughter of Aaron in the father's line; for the families of David and Aaron frequently intermarried, and this affinity was typical of the union of the kingly and priestly office in the person of the Messiah. Mary's conception in virginity was more evidently miraculous than Elisabeth's in her old age; but nothing was, or could be, impossible to the power of God. When Mary heard this, she did not in the least waver in her belief of what the angel had told her; and though she could not but fear that her pregnancy would expose her to many suspicions or injurious reflections, and indeed to great danger, she humbly and implicitly resigned herself to the divine will, saying, "Behold, here I am, the handmaid and servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to thy word." Probably the miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit immediately took place; and the angel having executed his commission departed from her.

V. 39—45. As soon after this vision as she conveniently could, Mary, being in haste to communicate with Elisabeth, took a long journey from Nazareth to the hill-country of Judea, perhaps to Hebron, for that purpose. Being arrived, she saluted Elisabeth, and probably congratulated her on the unexpected favour conferred on her; and no sooner did Elisabeth hear her voice, than she felt the infant leap in her womb in a very extraordinary manner, even as if he had been conscious of the presence of the mother of the great Redeemer, whom he was appointed to precede. At the same time Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and under his prophetic influence she pronounced Mary, and the fruit of her womb, to be most blessed, or *happy*, as peculiarly honoured by the most high God; and though she was the superior in age, station, and reputation, yet she considered Mary as so distinguished a person, by being chosen to be the mother of the Messiah,

56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

57 ¶ Now ^b Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

58 And ⁱ her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her: ^k and they rejoiced with her.

59 And it came to pass, that ^l on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

60 And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John.

61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

62 And ⁿ they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

63 And he asked for ^o a writing-table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

64 And ^p his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, ^q and he spake, and praised God.

65 And ^r fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these ^s sayings were noised abroad throughout all ^t the hill-country of Judea.

66 And all they that had heard ^u them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! ^v And the hand of the Lord was with him.

67 ¶ And his father Zacharias was ^w filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

h 13. ii. 6. 7.
Gen. xxi. 2. 3.
Num. xxi. 19.

i 25. Ruth iv. 11.
-47 Ps. cxlii.
9

k 14. Gen. xxi. 6.
Is. lxxv. 9, 10.
Rom. xii. 15.
1 Cor. xii. 26.
l 11. 21. Gen.
xviii. 12. xxi. 3.
4. Lev. xii. 3.
Acts viii. 8 Phil.
iii. 5.

m 13. 2 Sam. xli.
29. Is. viii. 3.
Matt. i. 25.

o Prov. iii. 3. Is.
xxxv. 3. Jer. xvi.
i Hab. ii. 2.
p 20. Ex. iv. 15.
16. Ps. ii. 12.
Jer. i. 9. Ez. ix.
27. xxix. i. 21.
xxviii. 22 Mat.
ix. 35. Mark vii.
32-37.
q Ps. xxx. 7-12.
Ex. viii. 18, 19.
Is. xli. i. Dan.
ix. 24-27.
r viii. 16. Acts ii.
43. v. 5. 11. xix.
17. Rev. xi. 11.
s Or, things.
v 39. Josh. x. 6.
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t i. 19. 51. ix. 44.
Gen. xxxvii. 11.
u Ps. cxviii. 11.
v 80. i. 40. Gen.
xxviii. 2. Jude.
xiii. 24. 28. i.
Sams. ii. 18.
x. 1. 18. i. Kings
xviii. 46. Acts
x. 44. Num.
xi. 25. 2 Sam.
xxiii. 2. Joel ii.
26. 2 Pet. i. 21.

about to help them at that time, by fulfilling his promises concerning the Messiah, when they were sunk very deep in depravity, and in abject slavery to their enemies. This would be done out of regard to his *Mercy*, according to his former unmerited kindness to that nation; and in accomplishment of his promises which he had graciously made to their fathers, especially to Abraham, with relation to himself and his posterity; and that Seed in particular, "in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed." (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 56. After these things, Mary continued with Elisabeth till the time of her delivery drew near, and then returned to Nazareth. Probably she left the house of Zacharias at this time, that she might not be in the way, or too much noticed, when so many would be coming to see him and Elisabeth, and to congratulate them on the birth of a son in their old age; but we may be sure that the communications between these two favoured and pious women, while together, would be peculiarly delightful and edifying to each other. After Mary's return home, those events seem to have occurred which have already been considered, concerning the difficulties and conduct of Joseph in respect of her.

V. 57-66. The neighbours and relations of Elisabeth had no doubt previously heard of her pregnancy; but when the Lord had magnified his mercy, in making her the joyful mother of a hopeful son, they rejoiced with her, and cordially congratulated her on so unexpected a blessing. On the eighth day many of them met together, to attend on the circumcision of the child according to the law; and as it was customary to give children their names at that time, (perhaps with reference to Abram's being called Abraham when circumcision was appointed,) some of them proposed that the child should be called Zacharias. We find no instance in Scripture of any one called after the name of his father; but it seems that it was then become customary, and they meant it out of respect to Zacharias, especially as he was advanced in years. But Elisabeth would by no means agree to this, declaring that

he should be called John; at which they expressed their surprise, as none of the family bore that name. Zacharias, being deaf and dumb, probably spent his time in retirement and devotion, patiently expecting the termination of his chastisement: and having given Elisabeth some intimation of the heavenly vision, he seems hitherto to have left the whole matter to her. But the difference of opinion between her and her friends caused them *by signs* to apply to him to determine it; and he, in the same manner, desiring a writing tablet, wrote, that the child's name was John, that being a settled point, which was by no means to be disputed. *God is gracious*, which is the import of 'that name, is a name very fit for him, who was to be 'the first preacher of the kingdom of grace, and who 'was to point out him, from whose 'fulness we receive 'grace for grace.' (*Whitby.*) At this the company was astonished, not having hitherto been acquainted with the particulars of Zacharias' vision. But the time appointed for his correction being now expired, he immediately recovered the gift of speech, and used it in praising God. Probably he returned thanks to him, for his goodness and faithfulness in the birth of his son, acknowledging the righteousness of the rebuke under which he had lain, and praising the mercy of God, in restoring to him the use of his tongue. It is supposed that the prophetic hymn that follows was spoken at the same time. Zacharias seems also to have made public all the circumstances of the vision that he had in the temple; whence a solemn awe and fear fell on all the neighbours, respecting the event of these extraordinary transactions; and whilst they were rumoured abroad through the adjacent country, all who heard them carefully observed and remembered them, expecting great things from a child whose birth had been attended by so many wonders. In the mean time John grew up under the immediate protection of God, and the powerful influence of his grace: so that his knowledge and piety, far beyond his years, evinced that the Lord was with him in a peculiar manner.

Gen. ix. 26. 11.
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100. Gen. ix. 26. 11.

66 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel: for he hath visited and redeemed his people;

69 And hath raised up an Horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began;

71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;

73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

74 That he would grant unto us, that

we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear.

75 In holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.

76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways:

77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sin,

78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the Day-spring from on high hath visited us,

79 To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the way of peace.

V. 67—75. When Zacharias had recovered the gift of speech, he was also filled with the Holy Spirit, and uttered the following prophecy concerning the kingdom and salvation of the Messiah. He began with blessing and praising the Lord God of Israel, especially for again visiting his people in mercy, after having for a long time left them without inspired prophets; and having begun that work of redemption, which had so long been predicted and expected, in the birth of him, who was to be the forerunner of the Messiah; which was a certain proof, that he himself would shortly appear. So that, speaking of the Saviour as already come, according to the language frequently used by the prophets, he declared that God had "raised up a Horn of salvation for," his people. The horn, which is the ornament, and weapon of protection and annoyance of every enemy, in many animals, is an apt emblem of the divine Saviour; "the glory of his people," their Defender against every assailant, who makes them, "in all things more than conquerors."—This salvation was raised up "in the house of David," even Jesus, the Son of the Virgin Mary. His birth, character, and salvation, would accomplish the predictions of the holy prophets, from the beginning of the world; all of whom, in one way or other, gave intimations of the promised Messiah; and assured the people of God, that by him they should be saved from their enemies, and protected against all those wicked men and apostate spirits, who hated them and sought their destruction. So that the coming of this Saviour was intended to perform, or complete, the mercy, which God had been bestowing on their ancestors for ages past; and to accomplish the gracious and faithful covenant, which he had entered into with believers under different dispensations, from the first promise made to fallen Adam, and which he had renewed to Abraham by a solemn oath, in behalf of himself and all his spiritual

seed; the blessings of which were also shadowed forth under external signs and advantages, secured to his natural posterity. (Marg. Ref.) This promise, covenant, and oath, engaged, to all who were interested in them, deliverance from the power of Satan, sin, the world, death, and every enemy, as well as redemption from the curse of the holy law and the righteous vengeance of God; that, being safe under his protection, and partakers of his mercy and grace, they might worship and serve him, (without fear of being destroyed by their foes, or cast off by him,) in all righteousness and holiness, during the remainder of their lives in this world, and so at length inherit eternal felicity in heaven.

V. 76—79. Zacharias next addressed himself to his son, though at that time a child, declaring that he had the singular honour of being that "prophet of the most high God," who was appointed to go before the face of the Lord, even of Christ, to prepare his ways. (Note, 17.) The grand object of his preparatory ministry would be, to give the knowledge and assurance of salvation to the people of God, by the full remission of all the sins of every believer in Christ, and by this assurance to call men to repent, and accept of this inestimable blessing. All these benefits would come to them through the tender mercy, or bowels of compassion, of Israel's God, who, pitying the misery of perishing sinners, had caused this Day-spring from heaven to visit them, ushering in the appearance of the Sun of righteousness and the Gospel Dispensation. Thus light would be afforded to poor sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles, whose ignorance, guilt, and misery, resembled the darkness of a dungeon in which condemned criminals are confined, and whose dreary situation was like the dark shade of death and hell. Then would their minds be enlightened, and their path marked out, they would see their danger and their refuge, they

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80 ¶ And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit,* and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

CHAPTER II.

Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem, to be enrolled there, according to the decree of Augustus, 1—5. Jesus is there born in

would be inspired with hope and encouragement, they would be directed into the way of peace with God, with their consciences, and with each other, and they would learn to walk in those holy and happy paths, which lead to, and are an earnest of, everlasting peace and felicity.—This was evidently a very remarkable prophecy, describing the nature, privileges, and effects, of the salvation of the Gospel, and foretelling the success of Christianity both among the Jews and Gentiles. Probably it was much circulated, and attended to, among Zacharias's friends and the pious remnant of the nation.

V. 80. As John grew in stature, his understanding and judgment matured, and he gave indications not only of strong natural parts, and energy of mind, but also of strong faith, vigorous holy affections, great fortitude and resolution in the cause of God, a superiority to grovelling desires and pursuits, and a victory over the fear and love of the world. Thus did he ripen for usefulness; but whether his parents died whilst he was young, or whether they were especially directed by God in this matter, he seems neither to have received an education from the Jewish Scribes, nor to have attended on any sacerdotal services at the temple, but to have lived privately, in the most retired and unfrequented part of the country, being given up to meditation, devotion, and mortification, till the time when he openly appeared among the people as the Messiah's forerunner.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—7.

Those things, which we are required "most surely to believe," are most abundantly proved to be of divine original, and if our faith were as strong as the truths and promises are certain, we should continually rejoice in them. For the great transactions, on which our hopes depend, have been recorded, not only by such as "from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word," but by those who were guided by the inspiration of God, which was attested by the miracles they wrought, and by the prophecies interwoven with their histories. We should therefore endeavour to get acquainted with the "certainty of those things, which are most surely believed" by all true Christians, and to obtain a more exact knowledge of them, and also labour to bring our friends and neighbours to an established faith in them. This is the way to approve ourselves to be indeed *Lovers of God*, and to fill up our station in the community to his glory. Thus we shall evidently be "*righteous before him*," and not merely in the opinion of our fellow mortals; and an habitual tenour of conscientious and blameless obedience to all the commandments and

a stable, 6, 7. An angel makes this known to shepherds; and the heavenly host praise God in their hearing, 8—14. The shepherds, finding it to be as the angel had said, report these transactions, and glorify God, 15—20. The circumcision of Christ, 21. His presentation at the temple, and the purifying of Mary,

ordinances of the Lord, forms the best proof of our gracious justification, and the best ornament of the doctrine of God our Saviour. This is peculiarly needful and becoming in those who sustain the office of ministers; and it is a singular felicity, when married persons are of one heart in the worship and service of God. Yet some alloy to our comfort must be expected in every situation, and this consideration should reconcile us to our own trials, as we probably should be no gainers, could we exchange condition with those whom we are most apt to envy. But they who grow in grace as they advance in years, and who steadily attend to their proper work, may hope for increasing peace and comfort in the eve of life.

V. 8—25.

Whilst by faith we view our great High Priest in the temple above, continually presenting the prayers of believers before his Father's throne, with the fragrant incense of his intercession, and are encouraged to join our petitions to those of multitudes all over the earth, who every hour are approaching the mercy-seat by this "new and living Way;" let us also recollect how terrifying to our frail sinful nature the appearance of visitants from the world of spirits hath always been, that we may be thankful for the *invisible* ministry of angels: and that the Lord sends his messages to us by men like ourselves, whose terror cannot make us afraid. We need, however, fear no evil, but may expect glad tidings from heaven, when we are found in the path of duty; and if our prayers are accepted, all blessings will in due time be communicated. Nor should delays in this respect be construed into denials; many prayers, which we have been offering during years that are past, for ourselves and others, may be abundantly answered after we are gone to heaven. We ought not indeed to be anxious about having children, for we know not whether they would be cause of joy and gladness to us and to others, or the contrary; since it is obvious, that numbers seem to live only to render the world more wicked and miserable than it otherwise would have been, and then they die in such a manner, that we cannot but think it would have been "better for them, if they had never been born." Yet it is a peculiar favour to have children for whose Faith many shall have cause to rejoice, as instruments of God in doing good to others, and being themselves heirs of eternal life and happiness. In seeking such distinguishing blessings—those that belong to us, we should carefully observe the difference between a *great man in the world's esteem*, and one who is *great in the sight of the Lord*. The mighty conquerors, potentates, and statesmen, and all who have been renowned as philosophers, or men of exalted genius, as well as all

22—24. *Simeon's prophecy concerning him, 25—35: and that of Anna, 36—38. He grows, and increases in wisdom, 39, 40. At twelve years of age he*

goes with his parents to Jerusalem, and hears and asks questions of the doctors in the temple, 41—50. He is obedient to his parents, 51, 52.

the sons of affluence, ostentation, and magnificence, are mean, obscure persons, compared with a poor prophet who is filled with wisdom and zeal; who is superior to the smiles and frowns of the world; who wants none of its honours, advantages, or pleasures; and whose only employment and joy it is to bring sinners to repentance, to turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, and to call men to believe in Christ, and prepare for his coming to judge the world. Some measure of this kind of greatness we may desire for our children; and with that view, we should early devote them to God, and bring them up for him: and as some have been filled with the Holy Spirit from their mother's womb, we should hope and pray that our's may thus be changed in early youth by divine grace; and we ought to instruct them in the truth, as soon as they are capable of knowing good from evil. Nor should we forget, that early and constant temperance, and indifference about worldly pleasures, are proper indications of future eminence and usefulness; that the increase of true godliness tends to the termination of contentions in families, churches, and communities; and that *nominal Christians* in general need conversion to the real worship and service of God, as much as the heathen.—Even real believers are not always alike strong in faith: when they lose sight of the power, truth, and love of God, and pore on difficulties and impediments, they are apt to dishonour him by unbelief: thus the glad tidings and precious promises of his word become the occasion of their sin and correction; the very messengers of his mercy are constrained to give them intimations of his displeasure; the accomplishment of his promises is attended by rebukes, and their mouths are stopped in silence and confusion, when otherwise they would have been praising God with the voice of joy and gratitude. It is good, however, even under divine chastisement, to go on with our work, as far as we are able; for thus our afflictions may be mitigated and sanctified, and returning mercies will be preparing for us. But when we are peculiarly favoured, we should shun all ostentation: and every interposition of the Lord, to take away reproach or trouble, should remind us to court retirement, that we may meditate on his goodness and truth, pour out our thanksgivings before him, and seek his gracious teaching and assistance, in order to a due improvement of his mercies.

V. 26—33.

Whilst we contemplate the peculiar honour that was conferred on the Virgin-mother of our Lord, we should remember that angels rejoice over every sinner that repenteth; they deem those highly favoured, in whose hearts Christ dwelleth by faith, and are ready to congratulate each believer on so important a blessing. Happy indeed must they be, among the sons and daughters of Adam, to whom the Lord is graciously reconciled, and with whom he is present by his sanctifying Spirit. They may indeed be troubled and perplexed by many things which they read

and hear; and they can scarcely raise their hopes so high, as to expect the blessings intended for them: but they shall in due season be raised above their fears, assured that they have found favour with God, as most nearly related to the Saviour of the world.—Let us then rejoice in his personal and mediatorial exaltation: for he now reigns not only over the house of Jacob, but over angels, principalities, and powers, in heavenly places, as the Son of God and the Son of David. Let us seek to be, and to approve ourselves, the subjects of his kingdom, of which there shall be no end; and if we meet with sufferings in the way to the full enjoyment of our privileges and felicity let us remember how Jesus was abased, impoverished, reproached, rejected, and crucified, before he entered into his glory. We should therefore entirely rely on the promises of God, carefully observe his directions, and diligently keep his commandments: waiting on him in this manner, the Holy Spirit, by whose operation the human nature of Jesus, “the first-born among many brethren,” was formed in the Virgin's womb, will gradually renew his image on our souls, that we too in a subordinate sense may be “the sons “and daughters of the Lord almighty.”—In all our conflicts and temptations we should still remember, that with God nothing shall be impossible; and as we read and hear his promises, we should turn them into prayers, saying, “Behold the servant of the Lord, let it be unto me according to this thy word.”

V. 39—56.

They who are experienced in the things of God will delight in each other's company; they will take pleasure in speaking together of what the Lord hath done for their souls, and in joining in grateful praises or fervent prayers: they will value each other's pious counsels, cautions, and exhortations; and not decline that labour which is requisite in order to this communion of the saints.—The influences of the Spirit of God effectually counteract that emulation and ambition, to which we are naturally prone, and through which we forget our own mercies, by repining at the superior honour conferred on others. His holy consolations raise us above the petty disparities of external rank and station: in proportion to his sacred illumination, we feel our own unworthiness, learn thankfulness for every favour, and rejoice in the gifts and graces bestowed on others: and thus “in honour preferring them to ourselves,” we deem ourselves highly distinguished by the company of those believers, whom under another influence we should have looked down upon as our inferiors. Indeed, true honour consists in our relation and conformity to Christ; we ought therefore to rejoice in the company of those who are evidently thus dignified; and we should commend that faith and obedience, which even tend in a measure to reflect disgrace on our own less honourable conduct, or on that of such as are most dear unto us. Yet humble believers will appropriate no glory to themselves;

Before the
 year ended
 on Dec. 31,
 1899, the
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AND it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from ¹ Cesar

Augustus, that ² all the world should be ³ taxed:

U. M. 1891 14.
 N. 1891 9.
 N. 1891 10.
 * Or, "collected."

but will take occasion, from such congratulations, to magnify the Lord, and to rejoice in him as their God and Saviour, with their whole heart and soul. Notwithstanding every other distinction, they must have been for ever miserable without this salvation; their thankfulness will therefore always be connected with a humble sense of sinfulness, and of his mercy, who hath looked down with pity on their low estate, and raised them to the hope of everlasting happiness. Indeed, the almighty God, whose name is holy, might have been expected to have done great things *against us*, guilty and polluted criminals; but he hath greatly glorified even his holiness, in extending mercy to all them that fear him, in every age and nation. Proud infidels and Pharisees, and presumptuous sinners of every description, will be scattered by this powerful arm, and disappointed in the vain imaginations of their hearts; and haughty potentates' will be cast down from their thrones, into everlasting shame and misery; but the broken-hearted sinner, who abases himself before God, shall be exalted; and he will satisfy the desires of the poor in spirit, who long for spiritual blessings, whilst the rich and self-sufficient shall be sent empty away. This is the true reason why so many frequent those ordinances in vain, from which others go away abundantly satisfied, and rejoicing in the goodness of the Lord. For he still helpeth his true Israel, nor shall the believing seed of Abraham be ashamed for ever.

V. 57—66.

We should trace back every rill of comfort to the full fountain of the Lord's mercy, which he is continually magnifying. Delays often render the benefit doubly precious, by increasing our admiration and gratitude: and it is beautiful, when believers so behave, that all their neighbours cordially rejoice in the tokens of the divine favour towards them. When the promises of God are performed, as well as while we are waiting for them, we should keep close to his ordinances: nor should we be influenced by any counsels, expostulations, or examples, to deviate in the least from his commandments; and we should study by every method to perpetuate the remembrance of his mercies to us. At the removal of our chastisements, our mouths should be open to show forth the praises of the Lord; thus it will be known, that we approve the justice of the correction, as well as admire the mercy which has terminated it; and that we have derived benefit from our sufferings. We ought likewise to observe the dealings of God with our neighbours, and wait the event of his dispensations with attentive expectation; and when our children grow up healthy, and improve in the exercise of their faculties, we should ascribe it to the good hand of the Lord upon them, and take occasion to entreat him to give them also his heavenly grace and wisdom.

V. 67—80.

What multiplied praises, in heaven and earth, did the Saviour's advent occasion! Shall not we also unite in

blessing "the Lord God of Israel, who hath thus visited and redeemed his people?" We are equally concerned in the raising up of this Horn of salvation, and in the redemption which he made for sinners with his blood, as the Jews of old were. The predictions of holy prophets being fulfilled in Christ confirm the truth of the Scriptures to us, as well as to them; the covenant and oath of God to Abraham were intended to give us "a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us." Even John Baptist's ministry still calls on us to repent, and welcome our incarnate Prince and Saviour; the whole Scripture gives assurance of salvation to all believers, by the remission of their sins; and through the tender mercy of our God, this Day-spring from on high hath visited these distant nations, to give light to us poor benighted pagans, who then sat in darkness and the shadow of death. But let us remember, that this salvation implies a deliverance from our enemies, and from all that hate us; that, being set at liberty from bondage, as well as from condemnation, we "may serve God without fear," under the influence of the Spirit of adoption, "in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our future lives." Is this then the salvation we desire? Do we experience its power in our hearts and consciences? Do we use the light of the Gospel to guide us into the ways of peace and purity? If this be our case, we may be thankful and joyful, and expect complete victory over Satan, sin, and death, and an abundant entrance into heavenly felicity. Let us then take encouragement from the "knowledge of salvation," to repent and mortify every sin; let us assert our Christian liberty by being the diligent servants of God; let us fear nothing but sin and temptation, and the consequences of them; let us pray that the light which shines around us may shine into our hearts, and appear in our lives; and let us follow peace with all men, as well as seek peace with God and our own consciences. If it be the will of the Lord that we should live in obscurity, let us the more diligently seek to grow strong in the grace of Jesus Christ; and let those, who are preparing for public usefulness, live retired and mortified to the world, employing their time in reading, meditation and devotion, till the Lord shall open their way to some proper service for the benefit of his people.

NOTES.

CHAP. II. V. 1. It had been predicted many ages before, that the Messiah should be born at Bethlehem, (*Notes, &c. Mic. v. 2. Matt. ii.*) yet the mother of Jesus resided at Nazareth, at the distance of sixty or seventy miles from that city; and she continued there till far advanced in her pregnancy. She was not, however, directed to go to Bethlehem; and indeed that would have appeared too much the effect of design. But Augustus Caesar, the Roman emperor, being left to follow the dictates of his own ambition, rapacity, or resentment, issued an edict, that an account should be taken of the number and degree of all the subjects in his vast empire; which in a vain-glorious style was called, *all the world*, or the whole

e. Acts v. 37.
d. 1. Acts xiii.
7. xviii. 12.
xxvi. 26. xxvi.
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10. 26. 27. 28. 29.
30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35.
36. 37. 38. 39. 40.
1. Gen. xxi. 1.
xxvi. 7. Rom.
1. 12. 13. 14. 15.
17. 21. 22. 1. Sam.
xvi. 1. xvii. 12.
5a. xx. 5. M. c.
v. 3. Matt. h. 1.
- 6. John. 1. 42.
1. 47. 1. 48-3.
Matt. i. 1-17.

2 (*And* this ^c taxing was first made
when Cyrenius was ^d governor of Syria.)

3 And all went to be taxed, ^e every one
into his own city.

4 And ¹ Joseph also went up from Galilee, out ² of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, ³ unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because ¹ he was of the house and lineage of David :)

5 To be taxed with ^k Mary his spouse- ^k Deut. xx 7.
ed wife, being great with child. Matt. i. 18, 19.

6 And¹ so it was, that while they were there, ^mthe days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7 And ^a she brought forth her first-born son, ^o and wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in ^p the inn.

k Deut. xx 7.
 Math. i. 18, 19.
 1 Ps. xxxviii. 11.
 Prov. xix. 21.
 Mic. v. 2.
 nu. 57. Rev. xii.
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 nu. vii. 14. Mat.
 i. 25. Gal. iv. 4.
 o. 11. 12. Ps. xiv.
 c. 18. 111. 2.
 Matt. vii. 20.
 xii. 55. John i.
 14. 2 Cor. vii. 3.
 px. 131. Gen. xli.
 27. 131. 21. Ex.
 iv. 24.

habitable earth. (*Marg. Ref.*) because it contained all the most civilized and best cultivated regions that were then known. Some interpreters indeed suppose, that only the whole land of Israel, which was then governed by king Herod, and which was soon after divided into several distinct provinces, was included in this edict; and that it was issued on account of some umbrage that Herod had given Augustus. But this gives a very restricted interpretation of the word translated "all the world," of which no indisputable instances seem to have been produced. 'Such an account used to be taken of the citizens of Rome every fifth year, and they had officers on purpose appointed for it, called censors. Their business was to take an account, and make a register, of all the Roman citizens, their wives and children, with the age, qualities, trades, offices, and estates, of all of them. Augustus first extended this to the provinces. He was then at work on the composition of a book, containing such a survey and description of the whole Roman empire, as that which our Doomsday-book doth for England. In order where- to his decree for this survey was made to extend to the depending kingdoms, as well as the provinces of the empire: however, *taxes* were by the people of the provinces only paid to the Romans, and those of the dependent kingdoms to their own proper princes;—who paid their *tributes* to the Roman emperors. Three times during his reign he caused the like description to be made. The second is the description which St. Luke refers to. The decree concerning it was issued out three years before that in which Christ was born. So long had the taking of this survey been carrying on through Syria, Coele-syria, Phenicia, and Judea, before it came to Bethlehem. Joab was nine months and twenty days in taking an account only of ten of the tribes of Israel, and of no more in them than of the men that were fit for the wars. (1 Chr. xxi. 6.) And when a survey was ordered by William the Conqueror to be taken for England only, I mean that of the Doomsday-book, it was six years in making. No payment of any tax was made, (on this survey,) till the twelfth year after. Till then Herod, and after him Archelaus, his son, reigned in Judea. But when Archelaus was deposed, and Judea put under the command of a Roman procurator, then first were taxes paid the Romans for that country.' (*Prideaux.*) It is plain from this account, that the sceptre was at least departing from Judah when Christ was born. (*Note, Gen. xlix. 10.*)

V. 2. 'It is added, that this was "the first enrolling," to distinguish it from another, (*Acts v. 37.*) the same which Josephus and Eusebius speak of, and place under

Cyrenius also, but differing from this here. As for Cyrenius having rule over Syria at this time, that is to be taken in a looser, not stricter sense. Not that Cyrenius was there now the standing governor under the Romans, but sent by the emperor, particularly on this occasion, to take an inventory of this part of the empire. So saith Suidas, out of some ancient author; Cæsar Augustus, desiring to know the strength and state of his dominions, sent twenty chosen men, one into one part, another into another, to take this account, and Publius Sulpitius Quirinius had Syria for his province.' (*Hammond.*) 'Justin Martyr calls this Cyrenius the first procurator of Cæsar in Judea; namely, on this account, that he was sent to make this survey in Judea and Syria, even during the life of Herod the great.' (*Beza.*) Saturninus was the resident governor of Syria at this time, and Tertullian says that this survey was intrusted to him; and it is doubted by some learned men, whether the word rendered *governor* is ever used in that sense which the above interpretation requires. 'When Judea was put under a Roman procurator, then taxes were first paid to the Romans and Publius Sulpitius Quirinius, who is in Greek called Cyrenius, was governor of Syria: so that there were two distinct particular actions in this matter, done at two distinct and different times; the first, the making the survey, and the second the levying the tax thereupon. And what is in the first verse of the second chapter of St. Luke is to be understood of the former, and what is in the second verse only of the latter. And this reconciles that evangelist with Josephus; for it is manifest from that author, that Cyrenius was not governor of Syria, nor was any tax levied upon Judea, till Archelaus was deposed. And therefore the making of this description cannot be that which was done while Cyrenius was governor of Syria; but the levying the tax thereon certainly was.' (*Prideaux.*) 'This was the first enrolment made by Quirinius, governor of Syria.' (*Lardner.*) This very learned author, who has fully discussed the subject, supposes that there were two enrolments made by Quirinius; and that he is called the governor of Syria, though not then advanced to that dignity, because he was afterwards thus distinguished; and there seems no objection to this conclusion, except the testimony of Tertullian, above mentioned, which is far from being entitled to implicit credence. The second enrolment, or the levying of the taxes on the Jews, after the deposition of Archelaus, excited most dreadful commotions, and was an introduction to those seditions and insurrections, which at length brought destruction on Jerusalem, and unspeakable calamities on the Jews.

q Gen. xxvi. 1, 2;
1 Sam. xvi. 1, 2;
25 Ps. lxxviii.
26, 27, 28, 29
xxiv. 8 John
8: 9-12
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17 ¶ And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, ^k Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

18 And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

19 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

20 And all they that heard it, wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

21 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

22 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

23 ¶ And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

24 And when the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;

(As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.)

24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons.

25 ¶ And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law.

28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word;

30 For mine eyes have seen thy Salvation,

31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people:

32 A Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of thy people Israel.

increase the difficulty of unfolding the full meaning of each expression.

V. 15—20. When the angels had rendered their joyful adorations of God on this most happy occasion, the vision disappeared; and the shepherds, conferring together on the wonders which they had witnessed, determined to go immediately to Bethlehem, where they were soon enabled to find Mary, Joseph, and the new born Saviour, exactly in the situation which had been described. Having witnessed this instructive scene, they publicly reported the whole transaction, and the assurance given them that this child was the Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. This excited the astonishment of all who heard it, but they seem in general to have speedily forgotten it. Mary; however, carefully observed, and meditated on, all these wonderful incidents, which were so suited to enlarge her expectations, and enliven her holy affections: and the shepherds returned to their humble employment with joyful thankful hearts, glorifying and blessing God for his distinguished favours to them.

V. 21. 'That is, not when the eighth day was ended, but when it was come.' (Whitby.) This illustrates the expression, "after three days," as used concerning our Lord's resurrection. Our blessed Saviour was not con-

ceived or born in sin, and did not need that mortification of a corrupt nature, or that renewal unto holiness, which were signified by circumcision. But (Note. Gen. xvii. 10—12.) he was "made under the law," and, both as our Surety and Example, he was subjected to all its institutions. This painful ordinance was, in his case, a pledge given of his future perfect obedience to the whole law, in the midst of sufferings and temptations, even unto death, for us, and it was an entrance on that vicarious work which he finished on the cross. The name Jesus hath already been explained. (Note. Matt. i. 20, 21.)

V. 22—24. 'This being the oblation appointed only for the poor, discovers the poverty of Joseph and Mary, that they could not reach to a lamb of the first year, the offering, which they who had ability were to make.' (Whitby.) (Notes, &c. Ex. xiii. 1. Lev. xii.)—At the end of forty days, Mary went up to the temple, to offer the appointed sacrifices for her purification; for though in her case there were not all the same reasons for that observance, as in that of other women, yet she claimed no exemption. Joseph also attended her, taking the holy child Jesus; because, being a first-born Son, he was to be presented to the Lord, and redeemed according to the law.

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33 And Joseph and his mother married at those things which were spoken of him.

34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;

35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also); that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanneel, of the tribe of Aser; she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

37 And she was a widow of about

V. 25—32. The Jewish priests and scribes remained ignorant of the birth of their promised Messiah till some time after this. (Note, *Matth. ii. 9—12*.) But there was a small remnant, who had more spiritual views and hopes, and to them the Lord gave intimations of what had taken place. Among these was Simeon, concerning whom many vain conjectures have been formed by those, who want to represent the eminent believers mentioned in the Bible as persons that stood high in the world's esteem, but of whom we know no more than is here recorded. He was a man of remarkable equity and piety, who expected the coming of the Messiah, as the consolation of Israel, and the source of all their hopes and comforts. Simeon was likewise endued with the Spirit of prophecy, which had begun to be restored, after a suspension of about four hundred years from the days of Malachi; and by immediate inspiration he was assured, that he should not die till he had seen the Lord's Christ, or Anointed, the promised Messiah. Thus under the guidance of the Holy Spirit he came to the temple, at the very time when Joseph and Mary presented Jesus there, and so he witnessed the first accomplishment of a remarkable prophecy concerning him, (Note, *Hag. ii. 7—9*.) Seeing therefore the infant Redeemer, and knowing him by the Revelation of the Holy Spirit, he took him in his arms, and blessed God for his mercies to him and to his people; expressing himself willing, nay, desirous, to die, seeing the Lord now let him depart in peace, having favoured him with the sight of "his salvation." The Lord Jesus was thus called, because the whole salvation of a sinner centres in his person, as "God manifest in the flesh;" all the purposes and promises of salvation had reference to him; he purchased all the blessings of it by his blood; they are all treasured up in him, and dispensed by him to believers, and they are all applied through the operation of the Holy Spirit, who is given to us through his intercession. This Simeon acknowledged Jesus as God's salvation, which he had prepared before the face of all people," as he meant to exhibit him publicly before all nations by the preached Gospel; for as the light of the world, he was intended to illuminate all nations by his doctrine and grace, as well as to be "the glory of his people Israel." The chief honour of that nation consisted in having given birth to this glorious Saviour, and all true believers deem their relation to him their grand distinction, and learn to glory in him alone.—It is wonderful that, after so many clear prophecies in the Old Testament of the calling of the Gentiles, the Jews should have been all so blind, as to imagine God had "no kindness for them." (*Whitby*.) It is likewise worth enquiring, in this view, how far the bulk of professed Christians also may be blinded by prejudice, concerning

many things as plainly revealed in the New Testament.

V. 33—35. Whilst Joseph and Mary were astonished at the words of Simeon to the infant in his arms, he blessed them also, praying for them, and expressing his satisfaction in their felicity. He then assured his mother, that her son was placed for "the fall and rising again of many in Israel." Many of them would reject, despise, persecute, and crucify him, through the pride and enmity of their hearts against the truth: thus they would fall into sin and under condemnation, and this would terminate in the temporal ruin of the nation, as well as in the perdition of many souls; but at the same time numbers of those, who had sunk deep into error, profligacy, and impiety, yea, many of those who at first rejected and persecuted him, would at length repent, and by faith in him would obtain pardon, and so be raised up again to walk in righteousness of life. Yet he would be set for a sign to be spoken against; and be the very last of contradiction and opposition, to all orders and descriptions of men. His external meanness, his holy character, his humbling doctrine, and his spiritual salvation, proved equally offensive to the Pharisees and Sadducees, and interfered as much with the reputation and authority of the hypocritical priests and Scribes, as with the carnal prejudices of the nation in general. Notwithstanding therefore the distinguished honour conferred on Mary, she must expect to witness such things, from the cruelty and enmity of the people and rulers, exercised against her Son, as would, like a sword, pierce her soul with most exquisite anguish. This must have been emphatically the case, when she stood by the cross on which he suffered. It is also probable that she was exposed to persecution among the primitive Christians, and some of the ancients report that she at length died a martyr, but this must be allowed to be uncertain. The event, however, of Christ's ministry, and the dispensation which he came to introduce, would be "the detection of the thoughts of many hearts," or the imaginations and reasonings which secretly occupied men's minds. The plausible characters of numbers would thus be shown to be full of pride, malice, covetousness, and hypocrisy, whilst the humility, faith, and piety of others, who had been disregarded, would thus be brought forth and made manifest. *This child.* Neither look that he shall be applauded of all, yea, rather, he shall be as a common mark, whereat the arrows of contumely and reproach shall be generally shot, throughout the world: and his name and religion shall be sure to receive opposition and contradiction every where. And thereby men shall be tried, and occasion shall be given them to show either the truth or falsehood of their hearts towards his name and profession. (*Bp. Hall*.)

32 And she, ^a coming in that instant, gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that ^b looked for redemption in * Jerusalem.

33 And when they had ^b performed all things, according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

34 And ^k the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, ^m filled with wisdom: and ⁿ the grace of God was upon him.

35 ¶ Now his parents ^o went to Jerusalem every year at ^p the feast of the pass-over.

36 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem, after the custom of the feast.

37 And when they had ^q fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of *it*.

38 But they, supposing him to have been ^r in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

39 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

40 And it came to pass, that ^s after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of ^t the doctors, ^u both hearing them, and asking them questions.

41 And all that heard him ^v were astonished at his understanding and answers.

42 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

43 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about ^w my Father's business?

44 And they ^x understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

45 And he went down with them, and ^y came to Nazareth, ^z and was subject unto them: but his mother ^a kept all these sayings in her heart.

46 And ^b Jesus increased in wisdom and ^c stature, ^d and in favour with God and man.

V. 36—38. The Lord was pleased to confirm Simeon's testimony to Christ by that of Anna. She was a prophetess, and probably known to be so. Phaniel seems to have been an eminent person of the tribe of Asher. Having lost her husband, in the prime of her life, she continued a widow to her death. Some think that eighty-four years had elapsed from the death of her husband, others suppose her to have been eighty-four years of age; but the former opinion seems most consonant with the text. She resided close to the temple, that she might attend on all its sacred ordinances, and, having no relative engagements to occupy her attention, she spent her whole time in the worship and service of God, and joining frequent fastings with her constant prayers and supplications, for herself and her people, she employed the day, and often part of the night also, in these religious exercises, not desisting from them even on account of the infirmities of advanced age. This devoted person came into the temple at the same time when Simeon was speaking concerning Jesus, and she also returned thanks to God for sending the promised Saviour, and for favouring her with a sight of him, and she spake of him to all the pious remnant with whom she was acquainted, and who waited for a spiritual redemption in Jerusalem; for most of the citizens were looking for a temporal prince and deliverer.

V. 39. After these remarkable occurrences, and the completion of all things respecting Jesus and Mary according to the law, Joseph and Mary left Jerusalem, and it

is said that they returned to Nazareth; but St. Luke passes over the coming of the wise men, and the flight of the holy family into Egypt, for it is evident that this return to Nazareth did not occur till some time afterwards. Probably they returned to Bethlehem, supposing that Jesus was there to be educated. After some time the wise men arrived, and then, by the divine monition, they went into Egypt, and on their return went to reside at Nazareth.

V. 40. Jesus grew in strength and stature like other children, and at the same time *waxed strong in spirit*, (i. 80.) It was evident, that, as the faculties of his human soul unfolded, all holy affections and dispositions became proportionably vigorous; he was also filled with wisdom and knowledge, and all his words and actions were regulated in perfect conformity to the divine law, so that the special grace and favour of God evidently rested on him. As to the manner in which the indwelling Deity gradually communicated knowledge, wisdom, and holiness, to the human nature of Christ, we must confess that we know nothing. "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh;" That, *as man*, his wisdom and knowledge could not be infinite, or incapable of increase, we know, but how the union was formed, or the communications imparted, we cannot in the smallest degree comprehend or explain.

V. 41—52. These verses contain all that the Spirit of God has seen good to record concerning the childhood and youth of the divine Saviour; though we should have ex-

CHAP. III.

The time when John Baptist entered on his

ministry, 1, 2. His preaching and exhortations, 3—14. His testimony to Jesus,

pected a more adequate gratification of our curiosity on so extraordinary a subject. Joseph, his supposed father, and Mary his mother, used to go up to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. Perhaps Joseph went up at the other great feasts: but though the women were not required, yet Mary, and many others, who loved the ordinances of God, used to attend at the feast of the passover. And when Jesus was twelve years old, he went up with them; for it seems to have been the custom for young persons to accompany their parents at that age. When the days of unleavened bread were expired, they set out on their return home: and as great numbers came to Jerusalem from every part of the country, they journeyed in a great company; so that they departed without the child Jesus, who tarried behind, being engaged with the sacred ordinances and conversation, which attended the observation of the festival. Perhaps there was some culpable inattention in Joseph and Mary: for they took it for granted that he was in the company, among some of their neighbours and relations, who doubtless greatly delighted in his conversation; so that they travelled a whole day's journey before they missed him. But when they could not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, with great anxiety and under many apprehensions: and at length, after two days spent in journeying and returning, on the third day, probably towards night, they found him, not in the house of any acquaintance, nor in such places as young people generally frequent; but in some, court or chamber of the temple, sitting amidst the doctors or teachers of the law; diligently hearkening to their discussions and instructions, modestly proposing questions to them on various subjects, and pertinently answering such inquiries as were put to him; and this he did with such wisdom and propriety, that all who heard him were astonished and delighted with him. Thus he was pleased to emit some beams of his heavenly light and glory, even in his early youth; both to raise the expectation of the Jews, and to give a proper example to young people, for the regulation of their inquiries, employments, and behaviour. The common expression, by which he is represented as having 'disputed with the doctors,' is calculated to give wrong ideas upon the subject, and very contrary to those that naturally present themselves to the mind on reading this account. When Joseph and Mary saw Jesus thus engaged, they were exceedingly surprised; and his mother, in a way of gentle rebuke, inquired of him, why he had thus dealt with them? adding, "Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing," or in great anguish of mind. To this he answered, by inquiring wherefore they sought him? "Did they not know, that he must be engaged in his Father's business?" or, in those things which related to his worship and service. In this he had been, and must at all times be, employed; as they would have known, had they duly attended to the various prophecies, and to the words of the angel Gabriel, concerning him; and with this no regard to any earthly relation must be allowed to interfere. This expression also intimated that Joseph was improperly called his father; as he was in every sense the

Son of God. However, neither Joseph nor Mary at that time fully understood his meaning, having still many prejudices and much darkness upon their minds as to those subjects: yet, Mary carefully remembered, and deeply meditated on, all these sayings of her Son. But though in this one instance he showed the superior obligation of his great work to any authority, even that of a parent, yet he went down to Nazareth, and was in every thing else subject, not only to Mary, but to Joseph also: and it is probably reported, that he earned his livelihood by working as a carpenter, in making ploughs and yokes, till his entrance on his public ministry. And he still continued to increase in wisdom, as well as in stature; and was, (as man,) proportionably more worthy of the divine favour, as well as more dear to all who knew him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—7.

The Lord foresees and permits the innumerable volitions of free agents, and over-rules them for the accomplishment of his own righteous purposes: and thus he performs his prophecies and confirms his truth, even by wicked men, and by events which seem to us most casual. But who would have expected, that the Lord of glory, whom "all the angels of God worship;" when he became a child and was made of a woman, would have been lodged in a stable or laid in a manger? Yet this was but a specimen of "his grace, who, though he were rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." He well knew how wealth and magnificence glitter in our eyes and fascinate our vain minds; how unwilling we are to be poor, and to be meanly lodged, clothed, or fed; how we desire to have our children decorated and indulged; how apt the poor are to envy the rich, and to repine at their own condition; how prone the rich are to disdain the poor, and how backward to "condescend to men of low estate." He was aware what deference would be paid, even by his ministers and disciples, to the wealthy and the noble; and what an *improper* distinction would be made between them and the indigent, even in religious societies and places of worship. Too much of these evils are every where to be seen: and they must have been much more predominant, had our Lord appeared on earth attended with outward splendour and magnificence. But his condition, from his birth in a stable to his death upon the cross, was suited to expose the vanity of outward distinctions, and to ennoble and dignify poverty and all its mean attendants. When we by faith view the incarnate Son of God lying in a manger, we cannot but feel a check given to our vanity and ambition, our coveting and envying; our souls must in some degree grow more weaned from the world: we cannot, with this object before our eyes, "seek great things," for ourselves or our children, or disdain the poor believer; we cannot flatter the rich or honourable, or refuse respect to those, who are the most apt representatives of our poor and suffering Redeemer; and we should be more effectually delivered from such

15—18. *He is put in prison by Herod,*
19, 20. *Christ is baptized and receives*

testimony from heaven, 21, 22. His
genealogy traced back to Adam, 23—38.

errors in judgment and practice, did we more fully ponder these things in our hearts. But whilst, with admiring gratitude, we contemplate the Saviour's condescension, in thus enduring all to which sin had exposed us, from his birth to his death, let us not forget to copy the meekness and patience of his virgin-mother: she willingly endured fatigue, contempt, and neglect, and contentedly was lodged in a stable; and she met the pains of child-birth in that in-commodious situation, without complaining of the unkindness of the citizens of Bethlehem. If any persons, when performing the tender duties of the parental character, should be ready to complain, that their beloved offspring are not provided for as they could wish; let them think of Mary, wrapping her holy babe in swaddling clothes, and laying him in the manger: this will silence the rising murmur, or change it into admiring praise. And whilst we contrast her conduct with that of those, who then shut their doors against the most excellent and honoured persons, that ever visited the city; that they might entertain the sons and daughters of pride and affluence, let us learn to use hospitality without grudging, especially to poor believers; and instead of feasting the rich with ostentatious expense, let us entertain Christ in the person of his poor disciples. Thus we shall approve ourselves followers of God as dear children, and ensure a gracious recompense at the resurrection of the just.

V. 8—14.

We should learn to judge and act, as holy angels do: they did not regard the holy family any the less for being lodged in a stable; nay, the humility and abasement, which veiled the Saviour's glory as he lay in the manger, made it in their eyes more admirable; and he never appeared so honourable and excellent, according to their judgment, as in that situation, except when he hung expiring upon the cross for our sins, and praying for his crucifiers. These blessed spirits were perfectly satisfied to announce his birth to poor shepherds in the field, rather than to such as inhabited palaces, or even to those who were lodged in the precincts of the temple; for humble and simple piety, and honest industry, are more approved by the inhabitants of heaven, than all the dignities and wisdom of the world.—The angels delight in contemplating the mysteries of redeeming love, and in celebrating the praises of God, for those displays of his glory in which they are not personally interested; and they still as it were proclaim in our ears, that “to us is born a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.” These then ought to be glad tidings to all who hear them, and they will give great joy to all who believe them: for in them all our hopes centre, and from them all our comforts flow. What an auspicious morning then was that, which brought so great a blessing to lost mankind! How joyful was that day, which first conveyed the sound of the Gospel to our ears! But most happy for us the hour, in which we were enabled to believe in Christ for the salvation of our souls. Without this granted to us, we can have no reason to celebrate the nativity of Jesus with

rejoicings; for that event will enhance the guilt and condemnation of unbelievers; and if real Christians deem it proper to commemorate it, at a season set apart for that purpose, they will not do it with bacchanalian revels or luxurious feastings; but with more abundant thanksgivings to God and liberality to the poor. They will join their feeble lisps to the songs of angels, and with grateful acclamations repeat, “Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good-will towards men;” they will employ their prayers, examples, and endeavours, to give glory to God, by spreading the Gospel, by seeking the peace of the Church, and by copying his good-will to men; and thus they will ripen for the joys of heaven, by their worship and services here on earth.

V. 15—24.

When we are favoured with peculiar discoveries of the glory of the Lord, and of his love to us, we should excite one another to a more unreserved attention to his directions; we should examine more fully those things which he hath made known to us, and seek to have our faith confirmed by experience; we should endeavour to report to others, what he hath taught us concerning the divine Saviour; and, pondering such things in our hearts, we should endeavour to return from holy ordinances to our secular employments, glorifying God for all we have heard and experienced. Whilst we trust in the perfect righteousness of our divine Surety, we ought to copy his example; seeking the true circumcision of the heart, the genuine purification from the pollution of sin, and the dedication of body and soul to God, which were shadowed forth in these ancient types and institutions. We ought also to present our children to the Lord, who gave them to us, desiring that he would redeem them from sin and death, make them holy to himself, and number them with “the Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven:” and such poor services, if they be the fruit of a humble and upright heart, will not be rejected.

V. 25—40.

Professing to depend on the salvation of the Lord, and to wait for the consolation of Israel, justice, truth, and mercy, as well as piety, should adorn our conduct: and if the Holy Spirit rest upon us, our feet will be directed to the courts and ordinances of the Lord. In this way we shall experience the fulfilment of the promises: and if we embrace, as it were, the Saviour in the arms of faith, hope, and love, we shall meet death deprived of his sting, and be willing to leave this world and go to heaven, provided our work be done, and God be pleased to dismiss us to his rest. Blessed be his name, that this salvation is prepared before the face of all people, and that this Light hath lightened our gentle land: may we become a part of the true Israel, who glory in Christ alone! But let us not look merely on one side of this subject. This blessed Gospel eventually occasions the fall of many professed

a. 11
c. xxi. 1-4 23.
25. Gen. 10.
Acts iv. 27. xxi. 10.
26. xxiv. 27.
xxvi. 30.
c. 19. ix. 7. xxi. 11.
6-11.
d. Matt. xiv. 3.
Mark vi. 17.

NOW in the fifteenth year of the reign of ^a Tiberius Cesar, ^b Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, ^c and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and ^d his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

^e 2^e Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, ^f the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias, ^g in the wilderness.

3 And he came into all ^b the country about Jordan, ^h preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

e. John xi. 40-51.
xviii. 15, 14-24.
Acts iv. 1.
f. 1. Jer. 1.
2. 1. Ez. 1.
3. Hos. i. 1, 2. Jon. i. 1.
g. Mic. i. 1.
Zeph. i. 1.
h. 90. Is. xl. 3.
Matt. iii. 1. xi. 7.
7. Mark i. 3.
John i. 23.
b. Matt. iii. 5-6.
Mark i. 5. John i. 23.
1. 28. iii. 26. — Matt. iii. 6. 11. Mark i. 4. John i. 31-33. Acts xiii. 24. xix. 4. xxi. 16.

Christians, who neglect, despise, or abuse so great salvation; as well as causes the rising again of many, who were sunk deep into guilt and impiety. Still Jesus, and his doctrine and people, are placed for a "sign, that is every where spoken against;" still his truth and holiness are contradicted and blasphemed; still the preaching of his word is the touch-stone of men's characters, and often brings to light the secret pride, enmity, and wickedness, of their hearts; still they, who are blessed by their relation to Jesus, must expect to witness and experience such things in this evil world, as will wound and distress their souls; and still they must prepare to endure contradiction, reproach, and contempt, because they resemble their blessed Saviour. We should be careful how we indiscriminately condemn practices or modes of life, because many have disgraced them; for who can refuse a tribute of commendation to the pious Anna? When the relative and social duties have been attended to, or as far as consists with a due performance of them, it is very proper to spend the decline of life especially in retirement and devotion: and to serve God with fastings and prayers, day and night, as connected with deep humility, and a readiness to welcome Christ and his Salvation, and to speak of him to all that wait for his redemption, must be allowed to be vastly different from the pro¹ austerities and hypocritical devotions of self-righteous Pharisees, ancient and modern. But whether zeal against the latter hath not led many persons to overlook and even despise the former, instead of considering them, in similar circumstances, as models for imitation, is a question that ought seriously to be examined. They, however, who are most mortified to the world, and abstracted from it, or abundant in every good work from proper principles, will with one consent bear testimony to Christ, "as the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

V. 41—52.

But let us not pass over unimproved the only authentic record which we have of our Redeemer's conduct in his youth. When we had read that he "waxed strong in youth, filled with wisdom, and that the grace of God was with him;" (alas, most of us may say), "How contrary to my youthful years; in which I grew in sin and folly, as I grew in stature, and as the powers of my mind unfolded!" We might have expected to hear many extraordinary things concerning him: yet nothing is related of such matters as are commonly reported about promising children. We are, however, informed, that the ordinances and temple of God were his delight; and that in Jerusalem nothing so much attracted his attention, as the instructions of the public teachers of the divine law. These

things we ought to deem most worthy of our regard; in these we should find our chief satisfaction; thus young persons should employ their early days, seeking the knowledge of divine truth, attending on the ministry of the Gospel, proposing such inquiries to their seniors and instructors, as may tend to the increase of knowledge; and studying to be able with pertinency and propriety to answer such questions as may be put to them. From the earliest youth, every one should deem the service of God his great business: and the glory of his name and the duty owing to him must be allowed a pre-eminence, even above that of children to their parents, and must be attended to, even when it interferes with their inclination and satisfaction. In all things else the blessed Saviour hath left an example to young persons, of unreserved subjection, not only to their own parents, but even to those who are by any means intrusted with a kind of parental authority; and he hath also taught them patient industry and contentment in a mean condition. These, when connected with piety and humility, are proper evidences of an increase of true wisdom, and of having obtained favour with God: and they have a tendency to render the possessor dear to his fellow creatures also; especially to those who most deserve estimation, and whose friendship is a privilege. Let us then endeavour to keep the sayings of Jesus in our hearts, and to transcribe his example in our lives.

NOTES.

CHAP. III. V. 1. In the interval between the birth of Jesus and the entrance of John Baptist on his public ministry, various changes had taken place in the government of Judea and the adjacent countries. Augustus Cesar, having admitted his nephew Tiberius to a share in the imperial authority, died about three years after: and Tiberius was at that time in the fifteenth year of his reign, from his appointment as the colleague of Augustus. Not long after the death of Herod the great, his dominions were divided into four distinct governments, under the Roman emperor. Pontius Pilate had just been appointed procurator of Judea. Herod Antipas, the son of king Herod, held the government of Galilee; his brother Philip that of Iturea and Trachonitis, to the west of Herod's district; and Lysanias, (who seems not to have been of Jewish extraction,) held the government of Abilene, to the north of Galilee on the borders of Syria. These were called *tetrarchs*, from a Greek word signifying *four governments, or governing a fourth part*, i. e. of king Herod's dominions.

V. 2, 3. The ecclesiastical affairs of the Jews were at this time fallen into great disorder, and the high-priesthood was disposed of at the will of the ruling powers, from secular motives, without regard to the regular succes-

1 Is. xl. 3-5. Mat.
3 Mark. i.
John i. 23.

1 Is. xl. 3-5. Mat.
3 Mark. i.
John i. 23.

1 Is. xl. 3-5. Mat.
3 Mark. i.
John i. 23.

1 Is. xl. 3-5. Mat.
3 Mark. i.
John i. 23.

1 Is. xl. 3-5. Mat.
3 Mark. i.
John i. 23.

4 As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, *The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord make his paths straight.

5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; * and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;

6 And * all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

7 Then said he to the multitude that

came forth to be baptized of him, * O generation of vipers, who hath warned you * to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore * fruits * worthy of repentance; and begin not. to say within yourselves, * We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able * of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

9 And * now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

10 Gal. iii. 28, 29. — u xxvii. 29-31 Is. x. 33, 34 Ez. xv. 2-4 xxxi. 15. Dan. iv. 14. 23. Matt. iii. 10. vii. 19. John xv. 6 Heb. x. 28, 29. xii. 29.

p. Gen. iii. 15. Ps. lxxv. 4. 5. Is. lix. 5. Matt. iii. 7-10 xxvii. 33 John viii. 44. Acts xiii. 10. 1 Thes. i. 10. Heb. vi. 18. Es. xlviii. 37-31. Acts xxvii. 20. 2 Cor. vii. 10. 1 Gal. v. 22. 24. Phil. i. 11. Heb. x. 7. 5.

* Or. meet for. 8 xlii. 28, 29 xvi. 23-31 Is. lxviii. 1, 2 Jer. vii. 1-10 John vii. 33 Rom. iv. 16. ix. 7. t xlii. 40 Josh. vi. 3-8 Matt. vii. 11, 12 xxi. 43 Gal. iii. 28, 29. — u xxvii. 29-31 Is. x. 33, 34 Ez. xv. 2-4 xxxi. 15. Dan. iv. 14. 23. Matt. iii. 10. vii. 19. John xv. 6 Heb. x. 28, 29. xii. 29.

sion; and frequently the high-priest was deposed, and another substituted in his place: so that in some instances it appeared more like an annual office, than one held during life. It cannot be supposed, that there were, strictly speaking, two high-priests at the same time: but it is observable, that in the New Testament the same word (*ἐπίσκοπος*) is used for the high-priests and the chief priests, who were the heads of the twenty-four courses; so that the two persons, whom the Roman governor considered as the chief of the priests; and whose names stood as such in those public registers which seem here referred to, may be intended. From the time of the Maccabees, the high-priesthood had been held by persons, who also exercised a kind of regal authority. And when the nation was subdued under the Roman governors; the "ruler of the people," (*Acts xxiii. 5*), and the president of the sanhedrim, was the high-priest, or a chief-priest. Now Annas had been high-priest, in the ordinary sense of the word, but had been deposed by the Roman governor; yet it seems that he still continued "ruler of the people" and president of the sanhedrim, and possessed the principal authority over the Jews; while, after several other changes, Caiaphas, his son-in-law, had been appointed by Pilate high-priest, to officiate at the temple. So that an irregularity had arisen out of the confusion of the times: and the ruler or prince under the Romans, though a chief-priest, was a distinct person from the high-priest; Annas being the one, and Caiaphas the other. Thus St. John 'mentions the carrying of Christ to Annas first, as to an officer of principal authority among them, who sent him bound to Caiaphas, 'who "was the high-priest that year." (*John xviii. 13, 14, 24. Acts iv. 6*); 'and so continued all the time of Pilate's procuratorship.' (*Hammond*.) Some indeed suppose that Annas was high-priest, and that Caiaphas acted as his deputy: but no deputy of the high-priest was allowed to officiate, except when the high-priest was sick, or by some means incapacitated, and it does not appear that Annas was either: and the above statement seems satisfactorily to solve the difficulty, of two persons being considered as chief or high-priests, (*ἐπίσκοπος*): one as "the ruler of the people," and the other as performing the office of high-priest at the temple. Thus "the sceptre was departing from Judah," and consequently Shiloh was at hand, at the time when the word of the Lord came to John, as to the prophets of old; and when

by immediate inspiration he was directed to go into the country about Jordan, and "preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." From these words we learn that John preached the necessity of repentance, in order to the remission of sins; and that the baptism of water was an outward symbol of that inward cleansing and renewal of heart, which attend or spring from true repentance: so that if the baptized persons were really partakers of this inward humiliation and cleansing, they would certainly receive forgiveness of sins through the Saviour that was about to appear, as they would then be prepared to welcome and participate the privileges and blessings of his spiritual redemption and kingdom. (*Notes, Matt. iii. 1-12.*)—The word, &c. 'These are the very words 'used of the prophets of the 'Old Testament.' (*Marg. Ref.*) 'Shall we then think that the forerunner of the 'Messiah spake, the words of the Lord as did the prophets 'of the Old Testament; and that the prophets and apostles 'of the New Testament, on whom the Holy Ghost descended, to enable them to teach the mind of Christ to 'all future ages of the Church, should not speak and write, 'what they delivered as the rule of faith, by like 'divine assistance?' (*Whitby*.)

V. 4-6. (*Note, &c. Is. xl. 3-5.*) The words of the prophet, "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and "all flesh shall see it together," are here rendered, and all flesh shall see the Salvation of God; which shows, that in Christ the Lord's salvation, his glory is particularly displayed to mankind, and that the Gospel was intended to be due time to be universally diffused.

V. 7. 'What in St. Matthew is said to have been spoken to the Pharisees and Sadducees, is here said to have been spoken to the multitude; because it was spoken to the Pharisees, mixed with the multitude, and in their audience, and agrees to them, not only as being generally of one of these two sects, but being also an adulterous generation, degenerated from the seed of Abraham, to be the seed of the serpent.' (*Whitby*.) The warning here given seems to have been principally addressed to the Sadducees and Pharisees: though the people, being in general infected with the same leaven, were likewise in some measure included.

V. 8, 9. (*Note, Matt. iii. 8-10.*) Begin not, &c. 'Do not attempt to plead, as you generally do, your relation to Abraham; for it will not at all avail you.'

A. D. 30.
 Prov. ix. 7, 8
 xv. 12 Matt. xi.
 2. xv. 3. 4.
 Mark vi. 17, 18.

n. xlii. 31—34.
 2 Kings xxi. 16.
 xxiv. 4. 2 Chr.
 xxiv. 17—22.
 xxxiv. 16. Neh.
 ix. 28. Jer. ii.
 30. Matt. xxi.
 33—41. xxi. 6.
 7. xxi. 31.
 33. 1 Thes. ii.
 15. 16. Rev.
 xvi. 6.

A. D. 27.
 o. Matt. iii. 13—
 15. Mark i. 9
 p. ix. 28. 29. John
 xii. 27, 28.
 q. Matt. iii. 15, 17.
 Mark i. 10, 11.
 John i. 32—34.
 r. ix. 34, 35. Ez.
 ii. 7. 1a. xli. i.
 Matt. xii. 18.
 xvii. 5. xxvii.
 23. Col. i. 12.
 1 Pet. ii. 4.
 2 Pet. i. 17, 18.
 e. Gen. xii. 46.
 Num. iv. 3, 35.
 59. 43. 47.
 f. ix. 22. Matt.
 xviii. 55. Marc.
 vi. 3. John vi.
 42.

19 ¶ But ¹ Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,

20 Added yet ² this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

21 ¶ Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, ³ that Jesus also being baptized, ⁴ and praying, ⁵ the heaven was opened :

22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, like a dove, upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said,

Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.

23 ¶ And Jesus himself began to be about ⁶ thirty years of age, ⁷ being, (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli,

24 Which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi, which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Janna, which was the son of Joseph,

25 Which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Amos, which was the son of Naum, which was the son of Esli, which was the son of Nagge,

26 Which was the son of Maath, which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Semei, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Juda,

27 Which was the son of Joanna, which was the son of Rhesa, which was the son of Zorobabel, which was the son of Salathiel, which was the son of Neri;

28 Which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Addi, which was the son of Cosam, which was the son of Elmodam, which was the son of Er,

29 Which was the son of Jose, which was the son of Eliezer, which was the son of Jorim, which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi,

30 Which was the son of Simcon, which was the son of Juda, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Jonan, which was the son of Eliakim,

31 Which was the son of Melea, which was the son of Menan, which was the son of Mattatha, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David,

32 Which ⁸ was the son of Jesse, ⁹ which was the son of Obed, which was the son of Booz, which was the son of Salmon, which was the son of Naasson,

33 Which was the son of ¹⁰ Aminadab, which was the son of Aram, which was the son of ¹¹ Esron, which was the son of ¹² Phares, which was the son of Juda,

34 Which was the son of Jacob, ¹³ which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of ¹⁴ Thara, which was the son of Nachor,

35 Which was the son of ¹⁵ Saruch, which was the son of Ragau, which was the son of ¹⁶ Phalec, which was the son of ¹⁷ Heber, which was the son of ¹⁸ Sala,

36 Which was the son of Cainan, which was the son of Arphaxad, which was the son of ¹⁹ Sem, which was the son of ²⁰ Noe, which was the son of Lamech,

37 Which was the son of ²¹ Mathusala, which was the son of Enoch, which was the son of Jared, which was the son of Maleleel, which was the son of Cainan,

38 Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, ²² which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

u. 2 Sam. v. 14. i.
 (b. iii. v. xiv.

x. Ruth. iv. 18—
 22. 1 Sam. xxi.
 58. xx. 31. i.
 1 Kings. xii. 16.
 1 Chr. ii. 13—19.
 1s. lxvii. 20. 1s.
 x. i. 2. Matt. i.
 3—6. Acts xlii.
 22, 23.

y. Num. i. 7. 14. 3.
 vii. 12. 1 Chr. iii.
 11. 12. Nahum.
 Kama. Boaz.
 z. Ruth. iv. 19, 20.
 1s. vi. 9. 10.
 1 Chr. ii. 9. 10.

1 Sam. xxi. 12.
 Num. xxvi. 20.
 1s. i. 3. 4.
 1s. i. 3. 4.

1s. i. 3. 4.
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“the Son of God,” as the Bridegroom of the Church, and as “baptizing with the Holy Ghost,” fully answers the import of this appropriate term. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 19, 20. (Notes, Matt. xiv. 3—12. Mark vi. 14—29. Marg. Ref.)

V. 21. *Praying*, &c. ‘It is observable, that all the three voices from heaven, by which the Father bare witness to Christ, were pronounced while he was praying, or very quickly after it.’ (Doddridge.)

V. 22. *Bodily*, &c. It is evident that this was an appearance resembling a material substance, descending on Christ, as a dove lights on the ground; probably in the shape as well as after the manner of a dove. The emblem hath before been considered.

V. 23—38. Jesus is here said to have begun to be

about thirty years of age at his baptism; or perhaps to have begun, or entered upon, his public ministry by being baptized of John, when he was about thirty years old. This single expression of an inspired writer, outweighs all the specious conjectures of learned men, concerning the duration of our Lord's ministry; and if he was crucified in the year A. D. 33, it must have lasted longer than they generally allow; but the word *about*, and the *decimal number*, concur in warranting an opinion, that he was rather above thirty at this time. There seems no reason to doubt, that the following is the genealogy of Jesus in the line of Mary: but as the names of men alone, or chiefly, stood in public registers; so the name of Joseph, not that of Mary, must have been inserted. It is therefore added, that Jesus was *supposed* to be the Son of Joseph, which

CHAP. IV.

Jesus fasts forty days, and overcomes all the temptations of the devil, 1—13. He preaches in Galilee with great renown, 14, 15.—He goes to Nazareth; and while his words excite admiration, the

citizens are so offended, that they seek to kill him, but he avoids them by miracle, 16—30. He casts out an unclean spirit, 31—37; heals Peter's wife's mother, 38, 39; and works many other miracles, 40, 41. He preaches through the cities of Galilee, 42—44.

may refer to the legal constitution, as well as to the common opinion of the Jews, as he was born of Mary after she was married to Joseph. Joseph's father was called Jacob, (*Matt. i. 16.*) but marrying the daughter of Heli, and being perhaps adopted by him, he was called his son, and as such, his name seems to have been inserted in the public registers; and so the pedigree is carried backward in the line of Nathan to David, and from him to Adam, who was the Son of God as created by him in his own image, though he soon lost it by sin. Some of the same names indeed occur, which are in Joseph's genealogy: but as different persons often bear the same name, it seems needless to perplex ourselves about so common a case.—Indeed, Joseph could not, in the male line, be descended both from Solomon and Nathan. Yet the arguments urged to prove that this is Joseph's genealogy, not Mary's, seem formed on the supposition that the female line was excluded.—Cainan, (36.) is not found in the Hebrew text of the Bible in any of the genealogies, but only in the Septuagint, whence it seems to have been inserted in the registers: these, it is probable, the evangelists transcribed, as sufficiently exact for their purpose, and as more generally suited to command attention, than if they had altered them, and even rendered them more accurate. (*Marg. Ref.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—18.

Whilst the people of the world are eagerly contending for transient honours, or employed in carnal pursuits; the servants of God grow up in obscurity; but when the Lord hath prepared them for usefulness, he will bring them forth, and find employment for them. The true doctrine of the holy Scriptures is equally calculated to encourage the humble and to abase the proud: when faithfully and successfully dispensed, “the valleys are exalted, and the hills brought low,” and every obstacle is removed, to make way for Christ to reveal his salvation, and set up his kingdom in the hearts of sinners. But many attend the preaching of the Gospel, and come to sacred ordinances, who are no better than “a generation of vipers:” they should therefore be dealt with very plainly, nay, sometimes roughly; that they may be “warned to flee from the wrath to come,” and made sensible that it is in vain to rely on forms, notions, external privileges, or profession, without repentance and fruits meet for repentance. Some of this sort seem to think, that God would have no Church on earth, if their sect were cast off; but he would sooner form children to Abraham from the very stones of the street, than accept or save proud hypocrites and wicked professors of the Gospel. These are trees, at whose root the axe is laid, to cut them speedily down, that they may

be cast into the fire; because, amidst all their advantages, they have brought forth no good fruit: yea, they are light worthless chaff, to be driven, as with a whirlwind, into the unquenchable fire of hell. Men should therefore not only ask what they must do to be saved? but inquire more particularly concerning the proper evidences and effects of saving faith and true repentance; the duties of their stations, and the way in which they should wait for the consolations of the Gospel: and ministers should enter into the detail, and be exact and particular in answering such inquiries. In general, our repentance, faith, and love of God our Saviour, must be evinced by love to our neighbours and brethren: and surely our clearer discoveries of the unspeakable mercy of the Lord Jesus to our sinful souls ought not to render us more niggardly in relieving the distresses of our fellow-sinners; yet the rule laid down by this man of God would be deemed extremely rigorous, if we now should attempt to insist upon its being strictly observed. Thus much, however, we must say, “He who soweth liberally, shall reap also liberally;” and that “God loveth a cheerful giver.” It is not generally advisable for men to quit their stations in the community, provided they are not directly criminal; for though they be attended with peculiar temptations, yet they may also afford them peculiar advantages for showing the excellency of the Gospel and the power of divine grace, by a blameless deportment in them; and there are many employments, that could have no existence were men not wicked, which are nevertheless needful in the present state of the world, and a man may conscientiously serve God in them. Men should first be cautioned against the peculiar temptations of their respective employments, and to avoid the sins, and to give up the iniquitous gains which generally attend them: for if they cannot be induced by fears of the wrath to come, to renounce injustice and fraudulency, they are not likely to be led forward into the knowledge of Christ and his salvation. But when they are prevailed upon to make such sacrifices for conscience-sake, there is good encouragement to instruct them more fully in all things relating to his person, his atonement, his sanctifying Spirit, his holy precepts, and his perfect example, in every thing belonging to the doctrine, experience, and practice of Christianity: and eminent holiness will be so far from rendering a man proud, that it will proportionably abase him in his own esteem, render him regardless of his own glory, and make Christ more precious and glorious in his eyes.

V. 19—38.

The faithful servants of God will be sure to make themselves enemies among the proud and licentious; and

p John viii. 37.
John ix. 24, 25.
Acts viii. 57, 58.
xvi. 23; 24 xxxi
Or—32.

Or edge
12 Chr. xxv. 12.
John viii. 59. x.
39 xxvii. 6, 7
Acts xvi. 16.

s Matt. iv. 13
Mark i. 21.
Matt. x. 23 Acts
xiii. 50—52 xiv.
1, 2, 6, 7, 10—21.
xvii. 1—3 1031.

16, 17 xxviii. 4
xx. 1, 2, 53, 24
u 36 Jer. xxviii.
28, 29 Matt. viii.
29, 30 Mark i.
32 John vi. 63. i.

Cor. ii. 1, 5 xiv.
23, 24 2 Cor. xiv.
2, 4, 5 i Thes.
1, 5 Tit. ii. 13.

16, 17 Heb. iv. 12, 13.
x Mark i. 23.
Or Amay. xlii.
27 Acts xvi. 39.

y 41 vii. 23 Mark
vii. 23 Mark i.
21, 21 v 7.

2 Heb. iii. 14, 15.
1 John iii. 8.
Rev. xii. 2.

3, 10 Dan. ix. 24
Acts ii. 27, 16.
27 Rev. iii. 7.
b 39 Ps i. 16.

2 Zech. iii. 2.
Matt. viii. 26.
xvii. 18 Mark
iii. 11, 12 Acts
xvi. 17, 19.

xvi. 30, 42 xi.
c 18 30, 42 xi.
22 Mark i. 26 ix. 25. Rev. xii. 12.

29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the * brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

30 But he, passing through the midst of them, went his way,

31 And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath-days.

32 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

33 ¶ And in the synagogue there was a man which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,

34 Saying, † Let us alone: what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; * the Holy one of God.

35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in

the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

36 And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, * What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out!

37 And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.

38 ¶ And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house: and Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her.

39 And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her. And immediately she arose, and ministered unto them.

40 ¶ Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.

d Matt. ix. 33, 34.
22, 29 Mark i.
27 vii. 37.

e 32 x. 17—29
Ma. x. xvi. 17—
20 Acts xiii. 12.

f 5, 16, iii. 13.
Matt. ix. 27—
29, 30, 25 Mark
1, 28, 25 vi. 14.

g Matt. viii. 14.
32 Mark i. 29—
31 i Cor. ix. 5.

h vii. 3, 1 Matt.
xv. 21 John xiv.
3, 22, Jan. v. 14,
15.

i 25 viii. 21.

k viii. 2, 3 Pa.
2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

l Matt. viii. 15.
17 Mark i. 32
—34.

m vii. 21—23
Matt. iv. 23, 24.
xi. 5, xiv. 10,
14 Mark i. 38,
vi. 5, 56, 56
vii. v. 15. Mark
12.

V. 23—32. As the thoughts of the Nazarenes were fully known to our Lord, he told them, that he was aware they were disposed to use the common proverb, "Physician, heal thyself," with relation to him: intimating, that if indeed he were able to perform cures, he ought to have begun with healing the diseases of his old neighbours; or at least, that he ought now to do such miracles among them, as he had wrought at Capernaum, if he expected any regard from them. Thus they wanted to dictate to him, or to cavil at his ministry, because he did not comply with their humour, or pay court to them: nay, they spake as if they had a just claim to his miraculous cures, in preference to others. He therefore now first applied to them that proverb, which hath already been considered, (*Note, &c. Matt. xiii. 53—58:*) for having known him in a situation, externally perhaps inferior to their own, they could not endure to be warned and instructed by him, or admit of his superiority over them. But he further observed, that he had a right to dispense his favours as he saw good; and that in working miracles at other places rather than at Nazareth, he did the same as the ancient prophets had done: for in the terrible famine which took place in the days of Elijah, (*Notes, 1 Kings xvii.*) that prophet was not sent to relieve any of the poor destitute widows of Israel, but only to one who was of Gentile extraction: and in like manner Elisha cleansed none of the lepers of Israel, but only exerted his miraculous power upon Naaman a Syrian, (*Notes, 2 Kings v.*) So that if he had not only given Capernaum the preference to Nazareth, but had even neglected them, and conferred his favours on the Gentiles, they could not have objected to his conduct, without condemning these two prophets. But though their prejudices and unbelief were the real reasons

that they were not favoured equally with other cities; yet this declaration of our Lord, that he had a right to work his miracles where he pleased, exceedingly enraged them, as if it had been an inexcusable injustice! They therefore forgot the holiness of the day, and the religious purposes for which they were assembled; and rising up with one consent, they thrust him out of the synagogue, and even out of the city; hurrying him away to the brink of a precipice, that they might cast him down and dash him to pieces. But he miraculously eluded their attempt; and, passing unobserved through the midst of them, went to Capernaum, where he proceeded to teach the people with surprising authority and energy. (*Marg. Ref.*) 'When they heard Christ declaring them unworthy of the benefit of those miracles which he had done at Capernaum, and plainly intimating, that this Gospel should chiefly be received among the Gentiles, they, in a furious zeal, sought to destroy him.' (*Whitby.*) The inhabitants of the cities, in which our Lord's miracles were principally wrought, were unworthy of them; (x. 13—15. *Matt. xi. 21—23:*) but their prejudices were not so strong as those of the Nazarenes, nor were they disposed to persecute him; and there were more believers among them than at Nazareth. But in fact, the indignation shown on this occasion was excited by the doctrine of the divine sovereignty. "May I not do what I will with my own?" May I not confer *unmerited favours* on whom I will, without doing injustice to those who do not share them? The doctrine, which is supported against all objections by these questions, offended the men of Nazareth, as it ever did, and ever will, offend those, who "have not submitted to the righteousness of God." (*Notes, Matt. xx. 1—16.*)

p. 34. Mark i. 34.

p. 11.

o Matt. viii. 29.

xxvi. 63. John

xv. 31. Acts

xvi. 17, 18. Jan

ii. 19.

p. 12. Mark i.

35. John x. 34.

p. 12. Mark i.

35. John x. 34.

p. 12. Mark i.

35. John x. 34.

p. 12. Mark i.

35. John x. 34.

41 And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, "Thou art Christ, the Son of God. And he rebuking them, suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ."

42 And when it was day he departed, and went into a desert place; and the

people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them.

43 And he said unto them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; for I therefore am I sent."

44 And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

p. 11. 37.38. xlvii.

23 John iv. 40.

8 Mark i. 14, 15.

38. 39. John x.

3. Acts x. 38.

2. Tim. i. 2.

1. 18. xlv. 1-4.

xlv. 16. lvi.

1-3. John xv.

37-40. xvi. 2.

o 15. Matt. iv. 23.

p. 15. Mark i. 39.

V. 33-44. (Notes, Matt. viii. 14-17. Mark i. 23-39.) When it was day. (42.) This clause may be rendered "when the day was coming on;" and thus be reconciled to the words of Matthew, who says, that "it was a great while before day."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-15.

When we return from sacred ordinances, replete with those spiritual affections that are excited by the Holy Spirit, it is good to retire for prayer and meditation; and should Satan even take that opportunity of harassing us, we shall possess many advantages for repelling his assaults. Fervent devotion or sharp conflicts may render us for a time regardless of the concerns of our animal life, and this may subserve our earnestness and success: but the cravings of nature will again return, and then the devil will tempt us either to impatience, to irregular methods of obtaining a supply, or to excessive indulgence; we should therefore be especially upon our guard, after remarkable seasons of abstraction and communion with God. The enemy knows how to make his advantage of all the peculiarities of our situation; and we ought to study them ourselves, that we may be prepared for the assault, and have our answer ready. To whatever sin we are tempted, the Scripture, well understood, supplies us with spiritual armour of proof, with which to baffle the tempter. Let us remember in all our straits, that "man doth not live by bread only, but by the word of God also;" that all Satan's promises and pretences are illusion and deceit; and that if he be permitted to have any influence in disposing of the "kingdoms of the world and the glory of them," he only uses them as baits, by which to ensnare ambitious and carnal men to their destruction. We should therefore reject every opportunity of sinful gain or advancement with decision and abhorrence, as a price offered for our souls; and we should seek our riches, honours, and happiness, in the worship and service of God only. Thus, as his beloved children, angels will have it in charge to watch over us "in all our ways," and we shall be preserved from turning aside, through presumptuous or ostentatious "tempting of the Lord our God." As seasons of peculiar consolation are commonly transient, so are those of distressing temptation, especially when the enemy is vigorously resisted. But though he depart for a season, we shall never be out of his reach, until we are removed from this evil world. Yet when, in the strength and after the example of our Redeemer, we have obtained a decisive victory, we may hope for a respite, and an opportunity of

applying ourselves with composure and diligence to our proper work.

V. 16-31.

When we meet with acceptance for a time, in our endeavours to do good, we should expect some change or alloy. Indeed fame and honour do not belong to us, but to the Lord: nor can we reasonably hope to escape that reproach and contempt which he continually experienced: yet this ought not to damp our ardour, or dismay us from a constancy in our attempts to be useful. It should be our custom, as it was our Saviour's, to resort, on the Lord's day at least, to the assemblies of his people, to join in his worship and attend to his truth: and whether we read, hear, or preach, the word of God, we should inquire diligently into its meaning, and then apply it to our own case or to that others. The Spirit of the Lord, who anointed the Saviour for his work, and who hath revealed him in the Scriptures, must also discover him to our hearts in all his gracious characters and offices. Under this blessed influence, we shall perceive that the message of the Gospel is indeed glad tidings to the poor and humble: the divine Redeemer came on purpose to bind up the broken in heart, and to give peace to the wounded conscience; to rescue the wretched captives of Satan; to bring them forth into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and to the blessed light of divine truth; and also to open their blinded eyes, that they may behold, walk, and rejoice in this light, and be delivered from all the galling chains of their own destructive lusts. Let sinners then attend to the Saviour's invitation, in "the acceptable year of the Lord," when liberty is thus proclaimed to those that are bruised: let them seek to him for this blessed deliverance, that this Scripture may not only be fulfilled in their ears, but in their experience; whilst victory, peace, consolation, and the fruits of righteousness, are the results of their faith in the incarnate Son of God. But many will attend to the Gospel, and express their approbation of the things which are spoken; yea, many will give the Lord himself good words, who will not give him their hearts. Some prejudice intervenes, to furnish an objection against the humbling doctrine of the cross: and whilst the word itself excites their proud and carnal enmity, they will quarrel with something in the conduct and manner of the speaker, that they may not be self-condemned in neglecting his message. Many seem to think themselves entitled almost exclusively to the favour of God; yet they will not seek it in his way; when therefore others enjoy the privileges which they have forfeited, they are greatly offended. In vain do we show that God hath asserted his undoubted right to "do what he will with his own;" that he hath

CHAP. V.

Jesus teacheth the people from Simon's ship, 1—3. The miraculous draught of fishes, 4—7. Simon, James, and John, follow him, 8—11. He cleanses a leper, 12—15; withdraws for prayer, 16; heals a paralytick, and silences the objections of the scribes, &c. against his forgiving sins, 17—26; calls Levi, and justifies his eating with publicans and sinners, 27—32; and vindicates his disciples, for not fasting, at present, after the manner of the Pharisees, and John's disciples, 33—39.

AND it came to pass, that, ^a as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by ^b the lake of Gennesaret,

2 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were ^c washing their nets.

3 And he entered into one of the ships, ^d which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And ^e he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

4 Now when he had left speaking, he

said unto Simon, ^f Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

5 And Simon answering, said unto him, Master, ^g we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: ^h nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net.

6 And when they had this done, ⁱ they inclosed a great multitude of fishes; and their net brake.

7 And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, ^k that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw it, ^l he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, ^m Depart from me; for ⁿ I am a sinful man, O Lord.

9 For ^o he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

10 And so were also ^p James and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were ^q partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; ^r from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

11 And when they had brought their ships to land, ^s they forsook all, and followed him.

^a Gill. xii. 1.
^b Matt. xi. 12.
^c Mark i. 9 v. 2.

^d Num. xxxiv. 11. Calaneth.
^e Josh. xii. 3. Chinnereth.
^f Matt. xiv. 34.
^g Mark vi. 53.

^h Matt. iv. 21.
ⁱ Mark i. 19.

^j Matt. iv. 13.
^k John i. 41, 42.

^l Matt. xiii. 1, 2.
^m Mark iv. 1, 2.
ⁿ John viii. 2.

^f Matt. xvii. 27.
^g John xxi. 6.

^h Ps. cxxvii. 1.
ⁱ John xx. 3.
^j Luke x. 46.
^k 2 Kings v. 10.
^l 14. 12. xxxvii.
^m 4-7. John i. 5.

ⁿ 14.
^o 12 Kings iv. 3-7.
^p Eccl. xi. 6. John xxi. 8-11. Acts i. 41.
^q 1 Cor. xv. 56.
^r Gal. vi. 9.

^s Acts xi. 25, 26.
^t Rom. xvi. 2-4.
^u Gal. vi. 2 Phil. iv. 3.

^v Matt. ii. 11.
^w John xi. 32.
^x 1 Cor. x. 25.
^y Rev. i. 17 xxii. 3, 9.

^z 1 Es. x. 12.
^{aa} Judg. xiii. 22.
^{ab} 1 Sam. vi. 20.
^{ac} 2 Sam. vi. 9.

^{ad} 1 Es. xxi. 19.
^{ae} 1 Chr. xii. 12.
^{af} Dan. x. 16, 17.
^{ag} Matt. xvii. 6.

^{ah} 1 Es. xxi. 14.
^{ai} 5, 6. 18 v. 15.
^{aj} Matt. viii. 8.

^{ak} 1 Cor. x. 25. Mark i. 6.
^{al} 14. Matt. iv. 21.
^{am} 21. xx. 20.

^{an} 17. 2. Cor. xiii. 23.
^{ao} 1 Es. xxi. 19.
^{ap} 14. v. 12.
^{aq} xiii. 17. Mark i. 17.

^{ar} Acts ii. 47.
^{as} xxviii. 26.
^{at} Matt. i. 20. x. 27.

^{au} xix. 27.
^{av} Mark i. 18-25.
^{aw} 8. 21. 29.
^{ax} Phil. iii. 2.

commonly passed by formalists, to save pagans and profligates; and that he always dispenses his favours in that manner which tends most to display his own glory, and especially the riches of his unmerited grace and mercy. Instead of being silenced, they are the more exasperated by such representations; and their enmity to God often vents itself in revilings, outrages, and persecutions against his servants. But he, who avoided the assaults of his enraged enemies till his appointed hour arrived, will uphold and protect all his ministers, till they have finished their testimony.

V. 32—44.

If the ministers of Christ be persecuted from one place to another, let them boldly proceed in declaring to all men every where the way of salvation. The word they speak, being attended with the power of their Lord, will be made effectual to convince, alarm, and convert, some of their hearers: and, as no case can be desperate if Jesus see good to work, even those in their assemblies, who are most evidently possessed of "unclean spirits," may be delivered from them, and made illustrious monuments of his grace and power: and though the devil may create great distress to such as Christ is rescuing from his dominion, yet he cannot do them any real harm. We ought therefore to spread abroad his fame in every place; to beseech him in behalf of those who are diseased in body or mind; and to use our influence in bringing sinners to him, that his pow-

erful hands may be laid upon them for their healing. Whilst we thus hope in his power, truth, and love, for ourselves and those who are more immediately connected with us, we should seek to promote the preaching of his Gospel in other cities also. For though his personal ministry was confined to one place at a time, yet he may continue *with us*, by his word and Spirit, and extend the same blessings to other nations also; till, throughout all the earth, the worshippers and servants of Satan shall acknowledge him as the Christ, the Son of God, and find redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of their sins.

NOTES.

CHAP. V. V. 1—11. (Notes, &c. Matt. iv. 18—22. xiii. 1, 2. Mark i. 16—22.) This is generally supposed to be a more particular account of the manner in which Andrew and Peter, James and John, were called to be the constant followers of Christ, in order to their appointment to the apostolical office. Andrew indeed is not mentioned; but it is probable that he was present. The exact order of the history is not, on that supposition, observed. Some of the company might be employed in *mending* their nets after washing; and others in washing their nets, by casting them from the shore into the lake. All of them had become acquainted with Jesus some time before, and probably had attended him to Jerusalem, and returned with him through Samaria into Galilee: (John i. 35—42. iv.) yet they seem to have followed their ordinary employments, from time to time, till on this occasion

† Matt. vii. 2-4.
Mark i. 40-45.
u. xii. 12. Ex.
v. 6. Lev. xiii.
xv. Num. xii. 10.
10-12. Deut.
xv. 8. 2 Kings
v. 127. vii. 3.
Chr. xvi. 12.
20. Matt. xvi. 6.
xvii. 16. Lev.
13. 24. Josh. v.
14. 1 Kings xvi.
39. 1 Chr. xxi. 16.
v. xvii. 13. Ps. i.
19. xci. 15. Mark
v. 23.
2. Gen. xlviii. 14.
Mat. i. 6. 9.
ix. 28. Mark ix.
22-24. Heb. vii.
25.
2. Gen. i. 3. 9. Ps.
xxviii. 9. E.
xxxvi. 25-27.
2. Hos. xiv. 4.
Matt. ix. 22. 30.
b. v. 39. vii. 51. 55.
John ix. 50-52.
c. Mat. vii. 4. ix.
30. xii. 16.
d. xii. 14. Lev.
xiii. 2. Rec.
6. 9. Hos. xiv. 4. 10.
21. 22.
f. ix. 5. Matt. x.
18. Mark i. 44.
vi. 11.
g. Prov. xv. 33. 1.
Tim. v. 25.
h. Mt. ix. 25-25.
ix. 56. Mark i.
28. 45.
i. Mt. i. xiv. 25.
Matt. x. 20. 31.
Mark ii. 1. 2.
John vi. 2.
k. v. 12. Matt.
xv. 23. Mark
35. 36. vi. 16.
John vi. 15.
l. 31. 30. vii. 30.
xi. 52-54. xv. 2.
in Matt. xv. 1. Mark iii. 22. vii. 1.

12 ¶ And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold, ^a a man ^b full of leprosy; who, seeing Jesus, ^c fell on ^d his face, and ^e besought him, saying, Lord, ^f if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

13 And he put forth ^g his hand, and touched him, saying, ^h I will; be thou clean. And ⁱ immediately the leprosy departed from him.

14 And ^j he charged him to tell no man: but go, ^k and shew thyself to the priest, ^l and offer for thy cleansing according as Moses commanded, ^m for a testimony unto them.

15 But ⁿ so much the more ^o he went there a fame abroad of him: ^p and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

16 And ^q he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

17 ¶ And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, ^r that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, ^s and Jerusalem;

and ^t the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

18 And, behold, ^u men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought ^v means to bring him in, and to lay ^w him before him.

19 And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in, because of the multitude, ^x they went upon the ^y house-top, and let him down through the tiling, with ^z his couch, into the midst before Jesus.

20 And when ^a he saw their faith, he said unto him, ^b Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

21 And ^c the Scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh ^d blasphemies? ^e Who can forgive sins but God alone?

22 But when Jesus ^f perceived their thoughts, he answering, said unto them, ^g What reason ye in your hearts?

23 Whether ^h is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

24 But that ye may know ⁱ that the

they became his constant attendants. He had hitherto generally preached in the synagogues; but now such numbers thronged around him, that these places of worship could no longer contain them. Being therefore on the banks of the lake of Genesaret, or the sea of Tiberias, attended with a vast concourse of people, he saw two small fishing vessels near the shore; but the fishermen had just left them: accordingly he entered that vessel which belonged to Peter, and desired him to thrust it to a small distance from the land; and when this was done, he sat down, and thence instructed the people. Having finished his discourse, he directed Peter to thrust out his boat further from the shore, into the deep water of the lake, and there to cast out his net for a draught of fishes: to this Peter answered, that they had wearied themselves during the whole night, which was the proper time for fishing, and yet had taken nothing; at his word, however, they would make another attempt, though there was no human probability of success. But, beyond expectation, they enclosed immediately so large a number of fishes, brought thither by the power of our Lord for that purpose, that the net brake in some places with the weight of them: yet, by the assistance of their partners in the other ship, they secured them all; and with them both their boats were filled so much, that they were ready to sink. (Notes, John xxi. 1-11.) This display of the power and knowledge of Jesus so astonished Peter, that he was overpowered with awe and consternation: and being conscious of his own sinfulness, as well as impressed with a sense of Christ's holiness and majesty,

he very humbly, but ignorantly, desired him to depart from him, being afraid of some fatal consequence from his presence with so vile a sinner. Indeed, he seems to have been so astonished, that he scarcely knew what he said; though he spake according to the notions which have generally been entertained of a wicked man's danger from the power and presence of a holy God, or of those whom he especially approves and favours. The miracle itself was emblematic of many things; relative to the preaching of the Gospel, and especially of Peter's great success on the day of Pentecost. And when Christ had encouraged him and his companions, and assured them that he meant to employ them in bringing sinners, by his Gospel, to the obedience of faith, they hesitated not to leave all and follow him. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 12-15. (Notes, Matt. viii. 1-4. Mark i. 40-45.) —City. Probably not Capernaum: the confines of the city are intended, for the lepers were not suffered to live in towns.

V. 16. He withdrew; literally, he was withdrawing: that is, he frequently went aside from the multitude, into retired places, for those exercises of devotion in which his soul delighted.

V. 17. The "power of the Lord was present to heal them;" that is, the sick, who were brought to him, and not the Pharisees, who came to watch him. "So, "Thou answerest them," "Moses and Aaron, "and tookest vengeance of their inventions," "that is, the inventions of the people." (Ps. xcix. 8.) (Whitby.)

41. Ili. 11. Mat. 13. Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy.)^a I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thine house.

25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.

27 ¶ And after these things he went forth,^b and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom; and he said unto him, Follow me.

28 And he left all, rose up, and followed him.

29 And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans, and of others, that sat down with them.

30 But their Scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

31 And Jesus answering, said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

V. 18—35. (Notes, Matt. ix. 1—13. Mark ii. 1—17.)—*Strange things.* (26.) Or “things beyond all expectation;” or so wonderful, that we could not have thought of them.

V. 36—38. *No man, &c.* Perhaps the impropriety of attempting a coalition between the religion of the Pharisees, and even that of John’s disciples, when they did not become the disciples of Jesus, may be intended. True religion has been for substance the same, since the revelation of a Saviour to fallen man. Even the ritual law and the whole Mosaic dispensation, were intended to answer special purposes for a season; (Rom. v. 20;) and the traditions of the elders, with the ceremonies of the law, and many uncommanded plausible austerities, formed the religion of the strictest sect of the Jews, in our Lord’s days, to which many of John’s disciples, (as distinct from Christ’s,) seem in great measure to have conformed. But Jesus came, to introduce another and better dispensation than even that of Moses, which was “waxing old and ready to vanish away;” as well as to vindicate the moral law from the corrupt glosses and traditions of the Pharisees. He would not, therefore, allow his disciples to attempt a coalition between his religion and that of the Pharisees. Fasting, as far as obligatory and useful, would form a part of the new dispensation, and not be disgraced by the superstition, hypocrisy, and spiritual pride, which

32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

33 ¶ And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?

34 And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them?

35 But the days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

36 ¶ And he spake also a parable unto them: No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old: if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new, agreeth not with the old.

37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.

38 But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

39 No man also, having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new; for he saith, The old is better.

then attended it. But, as things then were, it would be as absurd to retain any part of the old system, and to graft Christianity upon it, as to put new, undressed cloth on an old worn-out garment, or new fermenting wine into old leather bottles. Thus the Jews, “going about to establish “their own righteousness,” and to shore up the old building by props and buttresses, refused to build on the Foundation which God himself had laid. (Note, Rom. x. 1—3.) And this attempt at a coalition between the old and new dispensations, or rather between the religion of the Pharisees and that of Jesus, was the grand fault of the Judaizing teachers of Christianity, against whom St. Paul so zealously contended, especially in his epistle to the Galatians. They wanted to mend the pharisaical religion, which was an old worn-out garment, with the Gospel; and to put the new wine of the Gospel into the old bottles of the antiquated ceremonies of the Mosaic law, and the traditions of the elders. As this interpretation has never before been proposed, as far as I know, I suggest it with much diffidence, having never been satisfied with the interpretation generally given. (Notes, Matt. ix. 14—17. Mark ii. 18—22.)

V. 39. As old wine is more valued, and deemed more wholesome and pleasant than new, which is yet in a state of fermentation; and as they who have been used to the former cannot readily be brought to relish the latter, but

CHAP. VI.

Jesus vindicates his disciples from the charge of breaking the sabbath, 1—5. He shews it lawful to do good on the sabbath, and restores a withered houl, 6—10. His enemies are filled with madness, 11. He spends the night in prayer, 12; appoints the twelve apostles, 13—16; heals divers diseased persons, 17—19;

pronounces blessings and woes, 20—26; and teaches love to enemies, meekness, liberality, mercy, and candour, 27—38. He shews, by parables, that knowledge is indispensably needful in teachers, and holiness in reformers, 39—42. The tree is known by its fruit, 43—45. The parable of the wise and the foolish builders, 46—49.

will still prefer the old wine : so the substantial of religion, which have been the same from the first revelation of mercy to fallen man, are far more valuable than the austerities, traditions, or peculiarities, of any party, or even the ceremonial observances of the Mosaic law; and they, who have been habitually conversant with the former, will not easily be brought to pay great regard to the latter, but will deem repentance, faith, and holiness, far preferable to them all. The Christian dispensation was *new*, compared with the Mosaic covenant; yet the religion of it is as *old wine*; it is that of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, &c. with only circumstantial variations. The verse, however, is generally explained to mean, that men cannot at once change their modes and habits of life, but must gradually be inured to those kinds and degrees of self-denial that are not immediately necessary; as persons that have been used to old wine must be gradually brought to relish the new: and therefore Jesus did not think proper to impose such austerities on his disciples at once, but gradually to train them up to hardship and suffering.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—15.

When multitudes press to hear the word of God, it becomes expedient to exceed ordinary measures of diligence in teaching them. On these rare and important occasions, every place and every day are seasonable and proper for the preaching of the Gospel; and the common maxims, by which such matters are regulated at other times, are superseded by far more weighty considerations. Whatever is employed in the service of Christ, it becomes holy by its relation to him: thus our houses, possessions, employments; and even refreshments, may be sanctified to us, by being rendered subservient to his glory. We are often called upon to renounce temporal advantages for his sake; but we are seldom even in these things eventually losers by him. Obedience to his word, and dependence on his power and blessing, will in every respect ensure all desirable success; but especially in the great concerns of religion. The minister, who hath toiled long under great discouragement and with no apparent success, must not give up his hope or cease from his labour, but at Christ's word he must again and again let down the net. Such delays sometimes tend to more signal success, by increasing humility, simplicity, and fervency of spirit in prayer: and thus the unsuccessful endeavours of many years may be amply recompensed by the blessing of God even on a single sermon! It would indeed be more encouraging to see some fruit of our labours from time to time; and

when this is not witnessed, it may well cause us to inquire whether there be nothing in our spirit, conduct, or doctrine, which prevents usefulness: yet the effect may at length be equally great, when we long labour diligently and patiently as it were in the dark. Let then the fishers of men persevere in their work, without yielding to discouragement, or growing remiss in it: let them seek only the salvation of souls, and not court applause, or fish for preferments, honours, or secular advantages: let them stand prepared to relinquish every worldly object at the call of Christ, that they may follow him more closely, and give themselves up wholly to their ministry: let them be helpers of each other in the work, as *partners*, and not *rivals*: and let them not fear but from henceforth they shall catch men. The more fully the Lord displays his excellent glory and majesty to us, the viler shall we appear in our own eyes: yet this should not induce us to say, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord;" but rather to entreat him to come and dwell in our hearts by faith, that he may transform and cleanse them. As we are all full of the leprosy of sin, so, when we hear of Jesus, we should humbly beseech him, saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make *me* clean;" nor need we fear a repulse, as this work is his delight and glory. Thus being saved from the guilt and power of our sins, we may diffuse abroad his fame, and be in some measure instrumental in bringing others to hear him, and to be healed of their infirmities.

V. 16—32.

In tracing the example of our divine Saviour, we find that he interchanged public services and retired devotion; and that the sole business of his life was to do good to men, and to commune with his Father. Thus our several duties should in succession occupy our time; and piety and charity should be connected in our continual conduct. A life thus spent will best manifest our faith in Christ, and evince that he hath both pardoned our sins and healed our souls. When professors of the doctrines of grace thus copy their Lord's example, they will effectually confute the malicious cavils and perverse reasonings of opposing Scribes and Pharisees: and being enabled by divine grace to delight in the holy service of God, which no man by nature can do, they will not only glorify him themselves, but excite others to do the same. Indeed, when the power of the Lord is present to heal men's souls; when the avaricious are induced to forego their lucrative employments because unlawful, and profligate persons *are* taught to live sober, righteous, and godly lives, by hearing the despised Gospel of Christ; mere spectators must sometimes be asto-

a Ex. xii. 15, 16.
 Lev. xxi. 7, 10.
 11. 5. Deut. xii. 17.
 b Matt. xii. 1.
 Mark ii. 23.
 c Deut. xxi. 25.

AND it came to pass, on ^a the second sabbath after the first, ^b that he went through the corn-fields; ^c and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.

2 And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, ^d Why do ye that which is ^e not lawful to do on the sabbath-days?

3 And Jesus, answering them, said, ^f Have ye not read so much as this, ^g what David did, when himself was an hungered, and they which were with him;

4 How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shew-bread, and gave also to them that were with him;

^h which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?

5 And he said unto them, ⁱ That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

6 ¶ And ^k it came to pass also on another sabbath, that ^l he entered into the

synagogue, and taught: ^m and there was a man whose right hand was withered.

7 And the Scribes and Pharisees ⁿ watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath-day; ^o that they might find an accusation against him.

8 But ^p he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, ^q Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose, and stood forth.

9 Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing: ^r Is it lawful on the sabbath-days to do good, or to do evil? ^s to save life, or to destroy it?

10 And ^t looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, ^u Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

11 And ^v they were filled with madness; ^w and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

d 7-9. v. 33.
 e Mark ii. 23. 24.
 f Marc. ii. 24.
 g John v. 9-11.
 h 1. x. 11-16.
 i Ex. xx. 10. xxxi. 15. xxxv. 2. Num. xv. 30-35.
 j Matt. xii. 3. 5. x. 4. xxi. 16. 42. xxii. 39.
 k Mark ii. 23. xii. 10. 28.
 l 1. Sam. xxi. 3-6. Matt. xiv. 3. 4. Mark ii. 25, 26.
 m Lev. xxiv. 5-9.
 n Matt. xii. 5-8.
 o Mark ii. 27, 28.
 p ix. 7. Rev. i. 10.
 q Mark xii. 9-14.
 r Mark iii. 1-6.
 s 1. iv. 16. 31. xiii. 40. Matt. iv. 23.

1. Kings xii. 1.
 2. Chron. x. 17.
 John v. 3.
 Matt. ix. xiv. 1.
 Ps. xxxviii. 32. 33. xxxviii. 12. 18. xlii. 10.
 Jer. xx. 10.
 Mark iii. 2. John v. 0-16. ix. 16. 28-29.
 2. Cor. xiii. 54. xx. 20. Matt. xvi. 59, 60.
 P. v. 22. 1. Chr. xxi. 9. xx. 17.
 1. 18. xiv. 21.
 John ii. 10. xxi. 17. Heb. iv. 13.
 Rom. ii. 23.
 q. 18. xli. 4. John ix. 4. Acts xx. 24. Phil. i. 26.
 1. Pet. iv. 1.
 x. xiv. 3. Matt. xii. 12. 15. Mark iii. 4. John vii. 19-23.
 s. ix. 56.
 t. Mark iii. 5.
 u. 1. ix. iv. 6. 7. 1. John xii. 8.
 Ps. cvii. 10. John v. 8.
 x. v. 28. Ps. ii. 1.
 2. Cor. ix. 3. Acts v. 33. vii. 54.
 x. vi. 11.
 2. N. 1. xlii. 15.
 x. 45. 48.
 John vii. 1. xi. 47, 48. Acts iv. 15, 16. v. 33. 34.

nished, and allow that they have witnessed strange things, which they did not expect, and cannot account for. As Jesus came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance, we too should be ready to go among them, as far as we have a prospect of doing them good; and especially to direct them to the only Physician of distempered souls: and if we well know our own sinfulness, and the power and grace of the divine Redeemer, we shall not disdain or despair of any.

V. 33-39.

Let us attend chiefly to the grand essentials of religion: for when externals and circumstantialities are magnified above their real importance, censoriousness and bigotry are the invariable consequences. Because humble Christians practise their self-denial and perform their devotions in secret, and without ostentation, Pharisees may sometimes be ready to conclude that they neither fast nor pray at all. But every part of our duty has its proper season and proportion, as stated in the Scriptures, and it should have the same in the conduct of our lives; the gracious presence of our Beloved makes a feast to our souls, whilst it is continued to us; but when our sins provoke his departure, or his frown, we are called to mourn and fast, as well as pray. The Lord, however, trains up his people gradually for the trials and hardships allotted them; and in perfect wisdom and tenderness he proportions their services to their strength: we should therefore copy his example, in dealing with the weak in faith, the young convert, or the tempted discouraged believer. They, who have been used to drink the "old wine" of divine consolations, and of a close walk with God, have not only lost their relish for earthly joys, but they will not easily be brought to attend to those novel inventions, and human additions to religion, which are far more ostentatious and showy, but far less valuable and satisfactory, than a life of humble

faith, and of devoted obedience to the commandments of our Lord and Saviour.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI. V. 1-11. (Notes, Matt. xii. 1-21. Mark ii. 23-28. iii. 1-6. *Second sabbath*, &c. (1.) Some render the original words, "the second prime sabbath;" supposing that the day of Pentecost was meant, and that it fell on the sabbath-day. The three great feasts were, in many respects, observed as sabbaths; for the feast of unleavened bread began in the evening, after the close of the fourteenth day of the first month, about the time when the passover was eaten. But when either the first day of unleavened bread, or the day of Pentecost, or the first day of the feast of Tabernacles, fell on a sabbath, it was reckoned peculiarly sacred. When the first day of unleavened bread fell thus, it was called 'the first prime sabbath': the Pentecost falling thus, was called 'the second prime sabbath'; and the first day of the feast of tabernacles, in this case, was called 'the third prime sabbath.' This is the opinion of Grotius, Hammond, and many learned expositors. But others render the words, "the first sabbath after the second day of unleavened bread." From this day, seven weeks were numbered, and then the Pentecost, or the feast of weeks, was observed. 'The first sabbath from the second day of unleavened bread was called δευτεροπρωτον; the second δευτεροδευτερον, the second sabbath from that day; the third, δευτεροτριτον, the third sabbath from that second day; and so on, till they came to the seventh sabbath from that day, that is, the forty-ninth day, which was the day of Pentecost. Epiphanius expressly says our Lord's disciples 'did this on the sabbath following the first day of unleavened bread.' (Whitby.) If this interpretation be adopted, the ears of corn plucked by the disciples must have been barley; for the wheat was not ripe till some time after. And though the offering of wave-loaves for the

12 ¶ And it came to pass in those days, ^a that he went out into a mountain to pray, and ^a continued all night in prayer to God.

13 And ^b when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose ^c twelve, whom also he named ^d apostles;

14 ^e Simon (whom he also named Peter) and ^f Andrew his brother, ^g James and John, ^h Philip and Bartholomew,

15 ⁱ Matthew and ^k Thomas, ^l James the son ^m of Alphaeus, and ⁿ Sinton called Zelotes,

16 And ^o Judas the brother of James, ^p and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

17 ¶ And he came down with them, and stood in the plain; and the company of his disciples, ^q and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from ^r the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon, ^s which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases;

18 And they that were ^t vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

19 And the whole multitude ^u sought to touch him: ^v for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.

20 ¶ And ^w he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, ^x Blessed be ye poor: ^y for yours is the kingdom of God.

21 ¶ And he said, ^z Blessed be ye that weep now: ^{aa} for ye shall laugh hereafter. ^{ab} Blessed be ye that are now hungry and thirsty: ^{ac} for ye shall be filled. ^{ad} Blessed be ye that are now hated, and despised, and reviled: ^{ae} for ye shall be honoured hereafter.

22 ¶ And he said, ^{af} I will send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: ^{ag} therefore whosoever will be the first, ^{ah} let him be last of all, and servant of all.

23 ¶ And he said, ^{ai} Blessed be ye that keep his commandments, ^{aj} that ye may have the right to the tree of life, and may not come into condemnation: ^{ak} but he that doeth not, shall be cast out.

24 ¶ And he said, ^{al} Whosoever will be perfect, ^{am} let him sell all that he hath, and give to the poor, and follow me: ^{an} and he shall have treasure in heaven, and shall not come into condemnation: ^{ao} but whosoever will keep his commandments, ^{ap} shall abide in him, and he will keep him from sinning.

25 ¶ And he said, ^{aq} If any man will be a son of man, ^{ar} let him take up his cross, and follow me: ^{as} for whosoever will save his life, ^{at} shall lose it: ^{au} but whosoever will lose his life, ^{av} shall save it.

26 ¶ And he said, ^{aw} If any man will be a son of man, ^{ax} let him take up his cross, and follow me: ^{ay} for whosoever will save his life, ^{az} shall lose it: ^{ba} but whosoever will lose his life, ^{bb} shall save it.

27 ¶ And he said, ^{bc} If any man will be a son of man, ^{bd} let him take up his cross, and follow me: ^{be} for whosoever will save his life, ^{bf} shall lose it: ^{bg} but whosoever will lose his life, ^{bh} shall save it.

28 ¶ And he said, ^{bi} If any man will be a son of man, ^{bj} let him take up his cross, and follow me: ^{bk} for whosoever will save his life, ^{bl} shall lose it: ^{bm} but whosoever will lose his life, ^{bn} shall save it.

29 ¶ And he said, ^{bo} If any man will be a son of man, ^{bp} let him take up his cross, and follow me: ^{bq} for whosoever will save his life, ^{br} shall lose it: ^{bs} but whosoever will lose his life, ^{bt} shall save it.

17 ¶ And he came down with them, and stood in the plain; and the company of his disciples, ^c and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from ^d the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon, ^e which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases;

18 And they that were ^f vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

19 And the whole multitude ^g sought to touch him: ^h for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.

20 ¶ And ⁱ he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, ^j Blessed be ye poor: ^k for yours is the kingdom of God.

21 ¶ And he said, ^l Blessed be ye that weep now: ^m for ye shall laugh hereafter. ⁿ Blessed be ye that are now hungry and thirsty: ^o for ye shall be filled. ^p Blessed be ye that are now hated, and despised, and reviled: ^q for ye shall be honoured hereafter.

22 ¶ And he said, ^r I will send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: ^s therefore whosoever will be the first, ^t let him be last of all, and servant of all.

23 ¶ And he said, ^u Blessed be ye that keep his commandments, ^v that ye may have the right to the tree of life, and may not come into condemnation: ^w but he that doeth not, shall be cast out.

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27 ¶ And he said, ^{ao} If any man will be a son of man, ^{ap} let him take up his cross, and follow me: ^{aq} for whosoever will save his life, ^{ar} shall lose it: ^{as} but whosoever will lose his life, ^{at} shall save it.

28 ¶ And he said, ^{au} If any man will be a son of man, ^{av} let him take up his cross, and follow me: ^{aw} for whosoever will save his life, ^{ax} shall lose it: ^{ay} but whosoever will lose his life, ^{az} shall save it.

29 ¶ And he said, ^{ba} If any man will be a son of man, ^{bb} let him take up his cross, and follow me: ^{bc} for whosoever will save his life, ^{bd} shall lose it: ^{be} but whosoever will lose his life, ^{bf} shall save it.

30 ¶ And he said, ^{bg} If any man will be a son of man, ^{bh} let him take up his cross, and follow me: ^{bi} for whosoever will save his life, ^{bj} shall lose it: ^{bk} but whosoever will lose his life, ^{bl} shall save it.

31 ¶ And he said, ^{bm} If any man will be a son of man, ^{bn} let him take up his cross, and follow me: ^{bo} for whosoever will save his life, ^{bp} shall lose it: ^{bq} but whosoever will lose his life, ^{br} shall save it.

32 ¶ And he said, ^{bs} If any man will be a son of man, ^{bt} let him take up his cross, and follow me: ^{bu} for whosoever will save his life, ^{bv} shall lose it: ^{bw} but whosoever will lose his life, ^{bx} shall save it.

33 ¶ And he said, ^{by} If any man will be a son of man, ^{bz} let him take up his cross, and follow me: ^{ca} for whosoever will save his life, ^{cb} shall lose it: ^{cc} but whosoever will lose his life, ^{cd} shall save it.

CHAP. VII.

Jesus commands the faith, and heals the servant of a centurion, 1—10. He raises a widow's son at Nain, 11—17. He sends back the messengers of John Baptist, with an account of his miracles, 18—23; bears testimony to John, 24—30; and exposes the perverseness of the peo-

ple, respecting both John and him, 31—35. He is entertained by a Pharisee, 36. A woman of previous bad character washes and anoints his feet, 37—39. He justifies his conduct towards her by a parable, and shows that she loved much, and that her many sins were pardoned, 40—50.

self of any considerable measure of his beloved sleep for that purpose! Men will regard the diseases of their bodies as greater evils than those of their souls; but the Scripture teaches us to form a contrary judgment; for if we could have access to Jesus, and obtain from him the most perfect cure of every disease, and the greatest degree of health and long life that fallen man ever possessed, without deliverance from the guilt, power, and pollution of sin, by the efficacy of his blood and the virtue that proceeds from him, we must be miserable to all eternity. Yet how few, in proportion apply to him for this inestimable benefit!

V. 20—26.

We may easily discover that there is but little faith among professed Christians, while we observe how eagerly they seek happiness in those things on which Jesus hath pronounced a wo, and how they shun those circumstances in which he declares that true happiness may be found. Yet poverty, scanty subsistence, affliction, and contempt, when connected with humility, godly sorrow, faith, and an earnest desire after the blessings of salvation, tend more even to present comfort, than all the riches, splendour, luxury, and carnal mirth of proud unbelievers. The former tends to weaken all those evil propensities, which the latter more and more inflames; and a peaceful conscience, a submissive will, a contented mind, communion with God, well regulated affections, and the hope of heaven, will render a Christian more happy in a cottage, or a dungeon, than a prince can be in a palace, with a guilty conscience, a proud heart, a stubborn will, furious passions, and the fear of death, with all its terrifying consequences. And to the poor, humble, and despised believer, the kingdom of heaven exclusively belongs; there his best desires will be eternally satisfied, his tears will be changed for triumphant songs of joy, and his reward will be great in the blessed society of the holy prophets and apostles, and in that of the incarnate Son of God, who passed the same way to his glory. On the other hand, when a few fleeting years are gone, the rich luxurious sinner will lift up his eyes in hell, at the utmost distance from all consolation, and his unsatisfied desires will there for ever torment him; the giddy mirth of the dissipated will be turned to bitter weeping, and the laughter of the scorner will terminate in doleful wailings and lamentations. May these reflections be made effectual by the Spirit of God to rectify our judgments, and to direct our choice to that good part which shall never be taken from us, and to teach us to prefer the reproach and the cross of Christ to all the temporal pleasures of sin, or the applause of an ungodly world. Nor ought any one to be disquieted when

he hears worldly men, who teach smooth doctrines and prophesy deceits, applauded on every side; even if this be attended with invidious and malicious reflections on those, who are less complaisant to the fashions and customs of a wicked world. Thus the false prophets, whom God abhorred, were generally applauded even by his professed worshippers; whilst the true prophets, who declared his whole counsel, were hated, reproached, and persecuted, as if they had been the vilest of mankind. But it is unspeakably better to have the blessing of God, amidst man's contumely and execration, than to be abhorred by him, while "all men speak well of us."

V. 27—36.

We should be careful that our faithfulness in professing, or preaching, the truth of God, be not leavened with moroseness or resentment. Our attention ought, therefore, to be continually directed to those precepts, which require us to love our enemies, and to pray for our revilers and persecutors; and the bolder and more decided we are in the cause of God, the more pliant and passive we ought to be in our own concerns. We should in many things recede quietly from our due, and meekly submit to injuries and provocations; and at the same time we ought to persevere in doing to others as we *would* they should do to us; and in unwearied acts of kindness to the most perverse and ungrateful of our enemies. Such a conduct will evidence us to be the children of the Highest, who is kind unto the unthankful and evil; and ensure a large and gracious recompense from him: and it will prove the superior excellency of our doctrines above all other systems, and the efficacy of the sanctifying grace on which we profess to depend. Whereas, if Christians only love those who love them, and do good to such as do good to them, in what are their religion and principles discriminated from those of heathens, who do the same? Let us then do good and lend, hoping for nothing again; and let us aim to be merciful to the miserable and the vile, even according to the mercy of our heavenly Father to us poor perishing sinners.

V. 37—49.

To avoid needless offence, we should carefully abstain from all rash and rigorous decisions about men's motives, state, and character. Our great business is to judge ourselves, and not to judge another's servants, who must stand or fall to their own Master. We should never be backward to forgive any kind or degree of injury, as we hope to be forgiven by God for Christ's sake: and we may rest satisfied that we shall not be losers in the event, by the

NOW when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof:

7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers; and I say unto * one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

9 When Jesus heard these things, he

marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

11 And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.

16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.

[37 ——— g. 1. 68. xix. 44. Ex. iv. 31. Ps. lxxv. 9. cvl. 4, 5.]

most liberal and abundant kindness to others, according to our measure of ability, and as far as consists with other duties; for it shall assuredly be measured to us by the same measure with which we mete to others, whether that be more large or more scanty: These extensive and most excellent precepts, as well as the evangelical principles connected with them, are overlooked or explained away by many blind guides, of whom every one ought to beware; for they are falling into the ditch together with their followers, in vast multitudes continually. And as the disciple is not above his Master, let us be indeed the disciples of Christ alone, that, following his instructions and example, and regarding no man further than he declares the truth and bears the image of Christ, we may grow up into conformity to him, till at length we become perfect, even as our Master is perfect. Let us also seek to subdue our own evil tempers, and break off our sins, before we set up for censors or reformers of others; lest Jesus should check our officiousness, by saying, "Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye." As then the tree is known by its fruits, may the word of Christ be grafted in our hearts, that we may be fruitful in every good word and work, and that instructive discourse may be as natural to us, as corrupt conversation is to ungodly men. In vain do we call Christ, Lord, Lord, or

even call on him to rescue us from condemnation, if we do not the things which he says. May we then wisely come to him, hear his words, and do them; that we may with diligence "dig deep," to lay the foundation of our hope upon a Rock. Thus, when unbelievers of every name, whether they reject, despise, oppose, or abuse the Gospel, shall be driven with all their presumptuous confidences into everlasting ruin, we shall dwell securely, weather out every storm, and have at last "a building of God, and a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

NOTES.

CHAP. VII. V. 1—10. (Notes, Matt. viii. 5—13.) Thus is Christ said to have "preached peace," to the Ephesians, which personally he did not, but by his apostles. Notwithstanding, St. Luke, willing to add one evidence more of the centurion's humility, from the reason of his not going personally unto Christ, chooses rather to set it down exactly as it was in each circumstance, than only in brief as St. Matthew had done. (Hammond.) The centurion's liberal affection for the worshippers of the true God, shown in building them a synagogue at his own expense, is also added by St. Luke, as what had peculiarly tended to soften the prejudices of the Jews, and to conciliate their favour towards him.

themselves, being not baptized of him.

31 ¶ And the Lord said, ^k Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?

32 They ^l are like unto ^m children sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

33 For John the Baptist ⁿ came neither

eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, ^o He hath a devil.

34 The Son of man is come ^p eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, ^q a friend of publicans and sinners!

35 But ^r wisdom is justified of all her children.

36 ¶ And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. ^s And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

V. 18—35. (Notes, Matt. xi. 1—19.) John (18.) John from the prison sends his unbelieving disciples to Christ himself, to be confirmed: that, hearing and seeing him, they might by him be instructed, from whom they had otherwise fled, out of a preposterous emulation. (Beza.) In that same, &c. (21.) What a view does this verse give us of the number and variety of our Lord's miracles! The word, rendered gave, seems to express how highly gratifying the gift of sight was to those who had been blind; and in what a gracious and kind manner our Lord bestowed it, as taking pleasure in imparting so welcome a gift. Blessed. (23.) He adds this, to correct the preposterous emulation of John's disciples, (who envied the honour of Jesus, as eclipsing that of John:) but again, lest any should suppose that he meant to censure John himself, he subjoins a commendation of his office, which he places in the middle between the prophets and his own coming. (28.) The predictions of the prophets are compared with John's pointing out Christ to the people; and that again with the exhibition given of him in the Gospel. At the same time it is shown, that as much as the second discovery excelled the first, so much did the third excel the second. (Beza.)

And all, &c. (29, 30.) It is not evident whether these verses are a continuation of Christ's discourse, or the evangelist's remark upon its effects: our translation favours the latter supposition, yet the most approved expositors incline to the former. If they were the words of Christ, they called the attention of his hearers to the effects produced by John's ministry. The common people, and even the publicans and others of bad moral character, had been induced by it "to justify God;" for they acknowledged the justice of the punishment that was denounced against them for their sins, and their need of repentance, forgiveness, and a change of heart and life; and, professing these things, they had submitted to his baptism, and had regarded in some measure his testimony to Jesus as the promised Messiah. But the Pharisees and Scribes generally rejected his ministry, and were not baptized of him; and thus they rendered the counsel of God, in sending him to prepare the way of Christ, of none effect, as far as they were concerned, and despised the warnings and denunciation which John addressed to them. (Marg. Ref.) Hence it might be inferred, that their pride and hypocrisy were more adverse to spiritual religion than the ignorance or profligacy of the people, or the publicans; that they might be expected to be the inveterate enemies to Jesus, whose

forerunner John was, and that all must be cautioned not to follow such blind guides. If we understand the passage as the words of the evangelist, it implies, that the common people and the publicans approved of Christ's honourable testimony to John, and expressed themselves to be well satisfied with the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, displayed in that dispensation: to which they were the more inclined, as they had been baptized of John: but the Pharisees and Scribes, who had refused his baptism, were displeased with our Lord's testimony to him, as it implied a severe censure on their conduct: and thus they persisted in their opposition to the counsel of God to their own great loss and danger: proving themselves to be none of wisdom's children, by all of whom her appointments are justified and approved. (35.) In rejecting John's baptism, they rejected the gracious design of God, of calling them to repentance: and by that refusal declared that they approved not of his counsel, as just and righteous, in calling such unblameable persons as they were, and such zealots for the law, to repentance, that so they might escape the ruin threatened by John. For thus Eleazar, one of them, speaks, after the destruction of the Jews, that though all the rest of the Jews perished, we expected to be preserved, as having not sinned against God, nor been guilty of any fault, and who were teachers of others. Christ tells us, that they were "confident in themselves that they were righteous;" and represents them by the elder son, saying, "I never at any time transgressed thy commandments." (xv. 29.) They therefore deemed it an incongruous thing to call such righteous persons to repentance, and threaten them with ruin, who were so dear to God. But the publicans and common people were conscious to themselves of sins sufficient to expose them to divine judgments; and therefore they approved of this counsel God sent to them by his messenger; and declared him righteous, both in calling them to repentance, and threatening his judgments, if they did neglect it. (Whitby.) It is probable, that the Scribes and Pharisees who came to John, hearing his exhortations and warnings, declined his baptism, or at least that the rest of the body stood aloof from him.

V. 36. When our Lord had concluded his discourse, a Pharisee present, called Simon, invited him to eat with him. This man seems to have been considerably impressed with what he had seen and heard, but his prejudices were strong, and he was yet in suspense whether Jesus was, or was not, a prophet. It is probable, therefore, that he in-

38 And stood at his feet behind *him*
weeping, and began to wash his feet
with tears, and did wipe *them* with the
5 6 1. 1st 3 Jer. xxxi. 9 10—20. Joel i. 12 Zech. xii. 10. Matt. v.
11. Jam. iv. 9.—y 44. Gen. xviii. 4. John xiii. 4, 5.

39 Now when the Pharisee, which had
bidden him, saw *it*,^a he spake within
himself, saying, ^b This man, if he were
a prophet,^c would have known who and
what manner of woman *this* is that touch-
eth him; for she is a sinner.

gation,) should have supposed that St. Luke here records the same event, which the other evangelists relate concerning Mary, the sister of Lazarus. 'This woman was a woman of that city, either of Naine or Capernaum, the only cities mentioned here, whereas Mary, the sister of Lazarus, was of the village of Bethany.—After the collation here mentioned, our Lord "went through every city and village, preaching the kingdom of God," (viii. 1,) whereas after he raised Lazarus, "Jesus walked no more openly." (*John xi. 54.*) 'And Mary's unction was made for Christ's interment, and but six days before his last passover, when he continued in Bethany and Jerusalem.' (*Whitby.*)— 'This was in one of the Pharisees' houses, not in Simon the leper's, nor in Bethany. The Pharisee objected against Christ for this; not Judas, or one of the disciples; and the objection was not the unnecessary expense, as there, but that Christ would let a sinner be so kind to him, if he knew it, or if he did not, that he was no prophet. And then the discourse betwixt Christ and Simon, is far distant from that in the other Gospels, of anointing him for his burial: which also contains another circumstance in it, that that of Mary was immediately before his death, Judas going out immediately to betray him.' (*Hammond.*)—To this it may be added, that it is hardly conceivable a supper should have been made for Jesus, after Lazarus was raised from the dead, at which Lazarus was a guest, and Martha waited, and which was evidently done in honour of Christ, while yet the person who entertained the company should doubt of his being a prophet, because the sister of Lazarus his guest, and of Martha who waited, was permitted to touch him! And it is equally inconceivable that the Jews should throng to the house of Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother, if the character of Mary had been so infamous, that it was enough to induce suspicion against one, who was so eminent for his miracles and doctrine, that he permitted her to touch him!--There is every reason to think that Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, was, like her brother and sister, in all respects a person of approved character, even among such as did not receive Jesus as the Messiah; and though the circumstances of the alabaster-box, the anointing of our Lord's feet, and wiping them with her hair, and the leper being called Simon, as well as the Pharisee, seem at first glance to give some plausibility to the opinion, yet the more carefully the connexion of the narrative, the time, the place, the discourse, the woman's motive, the commendation bestowed on each, and indeed the whole account, is considered, the fuller must be the reader's conviction, that two different persons and transactions are intended.—St. John indeed records, that Mary anointed Christ's

d. v. 22. 21. vi. 9.

John xvi. 19. 20.

xviii. 18. xx. 20.

xi. 17. xxviii.

21. xli. 1. 6.

Matt. vi. 22.

xxviii. 49. John

xii. 2. xiii. 13.

i. xi. 4. xiii. 4.

Marg. 1. s. 1.

Matt. vi. 12.

xxviii. 23. 29.

c. 27. Rom. v. 20.

1 Tim. i. 15. 16.

h. Matt. xlviii. 23.

Marg.

i. xli. 48. Num.

xxviii. 3. Jer. xli.

17. John. x. 22.

- 21. Rom. c. 24.

1 John. - 9.

i. Pe. x. 7. 9.

Matt. xlviii. 26.

26. 34. Gal. ii.

10.

1 Pe. xxxii. 1-5.

i. 1-3. c. 5.

i. s. xi. 25.

i. s. 22. 26f.

xxxi. 33. 34.

Dan. ix. 18. 19.

Mic. vii. 18-20.

Matt. vi. 12.

Acts xli. 39. 39.

Rom. iii. 24. Eph.

5-8. xi. 6. Eph.

17. 19. 32. Gal. iii.

13. - m 47. 1 Cor. xv. 9. 10. 2 Cor. v. 14. 15. 1 Tim. i. 13-16.

n. s. 28. Mark xli. 64.

- o 37-39. - p Gen. xli. 2. Judg. xli. 21. 1 Sam. xxv. 41.

1 Tim. v. 10. Jam. ii. 6.

40 And Jesus ^a answering, said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, ^a Master, say on.

41 There was ^a certain creditor which had two debtors; ^a the one owed five hundred ^a pence, ^a and the other fifty.

42 And ^k when they had nothing to pay, ^h he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?

43 Simon answered and said, ^m I suppose that *he* to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, ⁿ Thou hast rightly judged.

44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, ^o Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, ^p thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she

hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head.

45 Thou ^a gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

46 Mine head ^a with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

47 Wherefore I say unto thee, ^a Her sins, ^a which are many, are forgiven; for ^a she loved much: But to whom little is forgiven, *the same loveth little.*

48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, ^a Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

50 And he said to the woman, ^y Thy faith hath saved thee: ^z go in peace.

feet; but St. Luke never intimates, that this woman anointed *his head*, as two evangelists do of Mary. This was more suited to the respectful and affectionate freedom of one long honoured with the Saviour's friendship, than with the weeping, trembling diffidence of a new convert whose life had been notoriously scandalous.

V. 40--43. Whilst Simon imagined he had got decisive proof that Jesus was no prophet, Jesus answered to his inmost thoughts in such a manner, as sufficiently evinced that he was far more than a prophet. Had our Lord directly attacked him upon the subject of his wicked and unreasonable pride, and disdain of the poor weeping penitent, (as we should have been apt to do,) he would probably have been only hardened and irritated by it; but the manner in which he addressed him was admirably suited to convince, without affronting him. Having called for the Pharisee's attention, by intimating that he had something of importance to say, he stated a case to him, desiring his opinion upon it.--The creditor in this parable evidently represents the Lord himself; the *two debtors*, one of whom owed him ten times as much as the other, denote different descriptions of sinners, who are all guilty, but in various degrees, and who have no power in any measure to pay their debt, or atone for their own sins. (Notes, Matt. xviii. 23--35.) As therefore two debtors, thus circumstanced and then freely pardoned, would love their kind creditor in some proportion to the sum remitted to them; so pardoned sinners may be supposed to love their gracious Lord in proportion to the degree of their guilt, or rather their own estimation of it. This case being proposed to Simon in the form of a question, he could not but allow, that the debtor, who had been freely pardoned the larger sum, would in all probability have the deeper sense of his obligations, and the more lively impression of his benefactor's liberality. The longer men live in sin, the more advantages they abuse; and the more mischief they do, the greater is their actual guilt; yet pride, and ignorance of

God, of the evil of sin, and of themselves, impose on many to think their debts small, when it is indeed very large; but gracious convictions always lead people to consider themselves as great sinners, and when they attain to a comfortable sense of forgiveness by the mere mercy of God in Christ Jesus, their love and gratitude will be proportioned to their humiliation.

V. 44--50. Our Lord, having approved of Simon's answer, proceeded to apply it to the case in question; and, turning to the weeping penitent, he asked whether he did not observe that woman? Simon had indeed noticed her with disdain, and thought that her presence even polluted his house, but he had not duly considered her tears of godly sorrow, and her expressions of grateful love. Our Lord, therefore, in the most beautiful manner, contrasted her conduct with that of the Pharisee. The latter had not even treated him with ordinary respect; when he came into his house, he had not so much as brought him water with which to wash his feet, he had not welcomed him with a friendly kiss, nor given him oil, which was cheap and plentiful, to anoint his head, according to the custom on such occasions; (Marg. Ref.) but this despised woman had washed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair; she had incessantly kissed his feet from her first entrance into the room, and had anointed them with the most costly and fragrant ointment. Therefore, though her sins had been very many and aggravated, even more and greater than Simon supposed, yet they were all forgiven, *for she loved much.* Many expositors would render it, *Therefore she loved much*, though they allow this use of the Greek participle to be very uncommon. But there seems no occasion for the alteration, and in fact no indisputable instance of its being used in this sense has been produced. Her love was not the cause of her forgiveness, which is ascribed to her faith, but it was an evidence of it; for it proved the sincerity of her repentance, and faith in Christ, from which her forgiveness might with certainty be inferred. Indeed, if her love to Christ had arisen from the

CHAP. VIII.

Our Lord preaches, attended with his apostles, and women who ministered to him, 1—3. The parable of the sower, with its interpretation, 4—15: and that of the lighted candle, 16—18. Christ's

obedient disciples, his most beloved relations, 19—21. He calms the tempest, 22—25; and casts out the legion, 26—39. He cures the woman who had an issue of blood, and raises Jairus' daughter, 40—56.

assurance that her sins were forgiven, there would have been no occasion for him to have repeatedly assured her that they were; but he pointed out the effects of her fervent love, both to comfort her drooping heart, and to silence her rigorous judges. The word rendered *wherefore*, in the beginning of the forty-seventh verse, signifies, *On account of which, or for the sake of which*, and seems at least to induce as much difficulty as that translated *for*. But the verse may perhaps be thus paraphrased, as it stands in the context. 'Observing these effects of this woman's love and gratitude, it is reasonable on account of them, as evidences of her repentance and faith, to conclude, that her numerous sins are pardoned; because it is plain that she loveth much, and so the depth of her repentance and the sincerity of her faith are put beyond all doubt.—Whereas, did she think her guilt but small, yet supposed that it was pardoned, her love would be so little, and the effects so indecisive, that her real character might still continue doubtful.' Thus our Lord intimated, that the Pharisees, forming such an erroneous estimate of their own character, could not properly value a free salvation, or love the gracious Saviour of lost sinners; and, were it possible that, in this state of mind, they should be pardoned, they could only love a little, and give him the formal cool reception that Simon had done, instead of showing, by every action, the fervent love and gratitude of this deeply humbled penitent. It is plain, that our Lord addressed Simon according to his own thoughts of himself, and not according to the real state of the case, when he seemed to allow that he "loved a little." This was frequently his manner, (*Notes*, xv. 25—32.) and there was something in it very conciliating, though plain and faithful. He certainly did not treat all Pharisees alike, or pursue every one, whose heart was not right before God, with all that severity, which he expressed against those who combined with their self-righteousness the most detestable hypocrisy and enormous wickedness. Some preachers have perhaps too much overlooked this, and a caution on this subject may not be without its use to those who are to succeed us. Having stated these things, our Lord more expressly declared to the woman, "that her sins were forgiven;" and, regardless of the murmurs which this excited, he encouraged her with the assurance that her faith in him had saved her soul, and that she might depart in peace with God and her conscience, for all the blessings of his Gospel belonged to her.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—17.

The grace of God is communicated to some of every rank and order in the community; and where it prevails, it influences men to a conscientious performance of the various duties of their several relations to each other.

When masters and servants behave properly in their respective situations, from the fear of God, they become dear to each other. They who love the Lord, will love his people also, and will be disposed to employ their wealth or influence in promoting his worship; and such as are most worthy, in the opinion of competent judges, will most honour Christ, and be most sensible of their own unworthiness. When we have received benefits which we are unable to return, justice, as well as gratitude, requires us to beseech the Lord instantly in the behalf of our benefactors, especially when they are under trials and afflictions; and we are most likely to obtain the greatest favours from him, when we are most sensible that we do not deserve the least. To him all things are alike easy; all creatures obey his word, and he never fails to answer the expectation of that faith which honours his power and love. Our blessed Redeemer's heart is susceptible of pity, on account of all the distresses to which we are exposed. The weeping widow and bereaved parent are the peculiar objects of his compassionate regard; and though he no longer restores their deceased relatives, yet the power which formerly effected this can now repair every breach, dry up every tear, and cause every bleeding heart to rejoice. Whilst many, therefore, glory in a worthless sensibility, or weep over imaginary woe with an unmeaning sympathy, and leave real misery to pine in neglect, let the Christian joyfully copy the compassion of his Lord; let him look out for those objects of distress which often lie concealed from the superficial observers of mankind, and endeavour to soothe the aching heart, to relieve the indigent, and to comfort the afflicted. In this way he will most reasonably hope for comfort under the troubles of life, and in the hour of death, from whose stroke no period of age or vigour of health can secure him; and thus he may also look forward with joyful expectation to the time, when the Redeemer's powerful voice shall call forth all that are in the graves, either to the resurrection of life, or to the resurrection of damnation. All the displays of the glorious power and majesty of the Lord should make us fear coming short of his salvation; and all his kindness to us, or to others, should excite us to glorify him, especially for visiting his people, and raising up a great Redeemer among them.

V. 18—35.

As the beneficent miracles of Christ, above all things, proclaimed him to be the Son of God and the promised Messiah, so the effects of his Gospel, in enlightening, reforming, and changing the hearts of sinners, is still the best evidence of the divine excellency of our holy religion. Ministers ought therefore to be peculiarly earnest in "preaching the Gospel to the poor," and in seeking a blessing upon it, that all may see its salutary effects in their sober, righteous, and godly lives; and every one

a. iv. 43. 44. Matt.
 v. 23. 13. 30.
 vi. 1. Acts 8. 3.
 vii. 10. 11. 13.
 viii. 1. 13. 14.
 Matt. x. 1. 13.
 2. 13. 30. 31.
 Rom. x. 1.
 1. 14. 15. 16.
 Mark x. 1.
 Matt. iii. 16. 19.
 d. xxv. 27. Matt.

AND it came to pass afterward, * that he went throughout every city and village, preaching, and shewing ^b the glad tidings of the kingdom of God; ^c and the twelve *were* with him.

2 And ^d certain women, which had

xxv. 55, 56. Mark xv. 40, 41. xvi. 1. John xix. 25. Acts i. 14.

should inquire into his own-motives, in going to hear the word of God, and ask himself whether he derives any benefit from it; for every minister is a messenger sent by the Lord Jesus to prepare the way before him, and to bring sinners to receive and obey him. But whilst numbers are offended with the truths and precepts of Christ, and reject the counsel of God against themselves, from one perverse prejudice or other, may we study to approve ourselves to be the children of wisdom, by attending to the instructions of the sacred oracles, and adoring those mysteries and dispensations, which proud infidels and Pharisees deride and blaspheme.

V. 36—50.



They who seek to do good to souls, must meekly bear with the perverseness of opposers, and avoid all affected moroseness; and they must endure personal slights, in order to have access to sinners, and to obtain a hearing from them. None can perceive the preciousness of Christ, or the glory of the Gospel, except the broken-hearted. But whilst they cannot sufficiently express their self-aborrence on account of their sins, or their admiration of his mercy and grace, the self-sufficient will not only be disgusted with them, but will even think the worse of the Gospel for giving encouragement to them! And men of this character often feel a deeper enmity against Christ, and his ministers and disciples, than they choose to avow. But did they know the real state of mankind, they must perceive the folly and malice of their objections: for “all,” without exception, “have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” By abusing his bounty, and refusing him the love and worship due to him, we have contracted a debt, of which we cannot discharge the smallest part; nay, it must continue to increase as long as we live in this world; for who can render unto God all that obedience during one day, which is due on every day? Or who can perform one service, that is free from every defect or alloy of sin? Without a *frank forgiveness* we can none of us escape the wrath to come; this our gracious Saviour hath purchased with his blood, that he might freely bestow it on every one who believeth in him. But he who is convinced of his own sinfulness, and expects pardon and all the blessings of salvation as the gift of God in Jesus Christ, will, in proportion, become humble, patient, contented, teachable, and obedient. Above all other things, he will learn to love Christ in every part of his character, and to value him in all his offices; he will desire his favour, be thankful for his mercy, and zealous for his glory; he will become earnest, constant, and diligent in endeavours to please him, and to recommend his salvation; he will love his ordinances, commandments, and disciples, and value every talent in proportion as it enables him to express his love to

been healed of evil spirits and infirmities. Mary called Magdalene, ^e out of whom went seven devils,

3 And ^f Joanna, the wife of Chuza, ^g Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him ^h of their substance.

e. Mark xvi. 9.
 f. xvi. 10.
 g. ix. 7-9. John
 ix. 46-53. 67.
 Acts x. 41. 1.
 Phil. iv. 22.
 h. Chr. xxix. 14.
 15. xxiii. 18.
 Matt. ii. 11.
 xxv. 40. xxvi.
 11. Acts ix. 35-
 39. 1 Cor. xiii.
 9. 1 Tim. v. 10.

him and his cause. Thus it often happens, that the vilest sinners, having been brought to repentance, and made joyful by a free forgiveness and salvation, become more zealous and active in obedience than other believers: “they love much, because much hath been forgiven them;” and they labour much, because they love much. And in the case of others, deep humiliation will always be connected with a proportionable love and willing obedience, when it is accompanied with a good hope that all their sins are pardoned. The scanty formal services, therefore, of too many, either prove that they have no proper sense of their guilt, and no just views of the preciousness of Christ, and the redeemed sinner's obligations to him; or that they love but little, because they suppose that little hath been forgiven them. But when a real and vigorous love to Christ springs from sorrow for sin, and hope of forgiveness through him, and is expressed by such methods as a man's situation admits of, we may from it safely infer that his sins, though many, are forgiven: and may thus give him great encouragement, without in the least palliating his guilt; and when the witnessing Spirit makes it evident to the believer's conscience that he doth indeed love Christ, he may know more certainly that his sins are forgiven, than if an angel from heaven had told him so. Let who will object to and murmur at these things, Christ will assert his authority of thus forgiving sin, and of bidding the weeping penitent depart in peace, as partaking of salvation through faith in his name. But may not we with shame confess, that whilst we hope that our many and great offences are freely pardoned, we yet comparatively love but little? If this be the case, we should seek for more heart-affecting views of our own vileness, and of Christ's preciousness; and we should give diligence to make our calling and election sure, and to get deeper impressions of our obligations to him, and expectations from him; that we may stand at a greater distance from the proud spirit of the Pharisee; that we may more simply trust and rejoice in Christ alone, and may so be prepared to obey him more zealously, and more cordially to recommend him to our fellow-sinners on every side.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII. V. 1—3. Some have conjectured that Chuza, Herod's steward, was the nobleman, or courtier, whose son Jesus had cured, (John iv. 43—54.) Doubtless it was by his consent that his wife accompanied Jesus, when journeying to preach the Gospel. As our Lord chose to be “poor for our sakes,” and did not work miracles for his own support, so these pious women, who had been under the greatest obligations to him, in respect both to their souls and bodies, being in good circumstances, were glad to communicate from their substance to the maintenance of him and his disciples, as well as personally to attend him:

1 Matt. xiii. 2. Mark. xiv. 1. Luke. x. 1. John. vi. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

4 And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable :

5 A sower went out to sow his seed : and as he sowed, some fell by the way-side ; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

6 And some fell upon a rock ; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

7 And some fell among thorns ; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

8 And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundred-fold. And when he had said these things he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

9 And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be ?

10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God : but to others in parables ; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

11 Now the parable is this ; The seed is the word of God.

12 Those by the way-side are they that hear ; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

13 They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy ; and these have no root, and which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

15 But that on the good ground are they, which, in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

16 ¶ No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed ; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

17 For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest ; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

18 Take heed therefore how ye hear : for whosoever hath, to him shall be given ; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken, even that which he seemeth to have.

19 ¶ Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press.

20 And it was told him by certain, which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee.

21 And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

22 ¶ Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his

and he was pleased to stoop thus low, for an example to his servants and disciples in similar circumstances. It does not appear that any men shared this honour "of ministering to Christ of their substance." (Marg. Ref.)

V. 4-15. (Notes, &c. Matt. xiii. 1-23. Mark iv. 1-20.) **Trodden**, &c. (5.) 'This is not mentioned by St. Matthew, or St. Mark, and seems to signify a great contempt of the divine seed.' (Whitby.) **Believe**, &c. (12.) 'Lest, believing, they should be saved.' The inseparable connexion of faith with salvation, and of unbelief with damnation, is here strongly marked, and as well known to the enemy of our souls, who therefore uses all possible methods to prejudice men against the true Gospel of Christ, or to render them inattentive to it. (Marg. Ref.) **Perfection**. (14.) Whatever is by any means destroyed, before it arrives at its full growth, and

before it is fit for use, is not brought to perfection ; and all in religion, that comes short of fruitfulness in good works, is like the corn that withers before it be ripe. **Honest**, &c. (15.) (Marg. Ref.) This man has not by nature, but by grace only. "God worketh in us to will" and to do." **Patience**. Or perseverance. "He that continueth to the end shall be saved." (Marg. Ref.) V. 16-18. (Notes, Mark iv. 21-25.) **Seemeth**. (18.) Either to himself or others. (Marg. Ref.) 'Heavenly good things are lost by parsimony, and increase by liberality.' (Beza.)

V. 19-21. (Notes, Matt. xii. 46-50. Mark iii. 31-35.) 'This might be intended as an awful intimation to some of his near relations, to take heed how they indulged that unbelief, which so long after prevailed in their minds.' (John vii. 3-5.) (Dodridge.)

t. Matt. xiv. 22.
Mark v. 21 vi.
45. viii. 13.

disciples; and he said unto them, 'Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth.

u Ps. xlv. 23 Is.
li. 9. Heb. iv.
15.

23 But as they sailed, ^u he fell asleep: and there ^x came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy.

u Ps. xlv. 23 Is.
li. 9. Heb. iv.
15.

24 And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, ^y Master, master, we perish! Then ^z he arose and rebuked the wind, and the raging of the water; and they ceased, and there was a calm.

x Ps. lxxv. 1, 2
xxvi. 3, 4 cxlii
4, 5. Lam. iii.
54-56. Jon. iii.
2-6. Matt. xiv.
20. 2 Cor. i. 9.
10.

25 And he said unto them, ^a Where is your faith? And they, ^b being afraid, wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this? for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

y Ps. lxxv. 1, 2
xxvi. 3, 4 cxlii
4, 5. Lam. iii.
54-56. Jon. iii.
2-6. Matt. xiv.
20. 2 Cor. i. 9.
10.

26 ¶ And they arrived at ^c the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

z Matt. viii. 28.
c Matt. viii. 28.
d Gen. i. 9, 10.
John xi. 49.

27 And when he went forth to land, there ^d met him out of the city a certain man which had devils a long time, ^e and wore no clothes, neither abode in any house, ^f but in the tombs.

d Mark v. 2-5.

28 When he saw Jesus, ^g he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, ^h What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? ⁱ I beseech thee torment me not.

e 1 Sam. xix. 24.

29 (For he had ^k commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For often-times it had ^l caught him; and he was kept bound with chains, and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

f Num. xix. 16.
Is. lxx. 4.
Ez. ix. 32-30. Mat.
viii. 29. Mark i.
24-27. v. 6-8.
1 Th. ii. xvi. 16-
18.
h 37, 38.

30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, ^m Legion: because ⁿ many devils were entered into him.

i Is. xxvii. 1.
2 Pet. ii. 1.
John iii. 8.
Rev. xxi. 1-3.
k Mark v. 8. Acts
xix. 12-16.
l 1 Th. ii. 26. Mark
v. 3-5 ix. 20
25, 26.

m Matt. xxvi. 53.
Mark v. 9.
n 2. Matt. viii.
29. Mark xvi. 9.

o 28. v. 8. Deut.
v. 25. 1 Sam.
vi. 20. 2 Sam.
vi. 9, 9. 1 Kings
xviii. 18. Job xxx.
16. 15. Matt.
viii. 34. Mark
v. 17. Acts xvi.
32. xxi. 2-4.
b ix. 5-56. x. 10,
11, 16.
c 28. 37. Ps. xxvii.
4. xxxvi. 7. Mark
v. 18. Phil. i. 23.
d Ex. xii. 25-27.
xiii. 9, 14-16.
Ps. lxxv. 17, 18.
lxxviii. 3-6.
cxvii. 21, 22, 31,
32. cxli. 2-4.
lxxvi. 7-13.
Mark v. 19, 20.
Acts ix. 13-16.
Gal. i. 23, 24.
1 Tim. i. 13-16.
cxvii. 15-18.
Deut. x. 21. Ps.
lxxvi. 16. xxvii.
2, 3. Dan. ix. 1.
31-37.
Mark i. 45.
John iv. 29.

31 And ^o they besought him that he would not command them to go out into ^p the deep.

o 28. John i. 11.
p Phil. ii. 10,
11.

32 And there was ^q there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they ^r besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And ^s he suffered them.

p Matt. xxv. 41.
Rev. ix. 2. xix.
20. xx. 2, 3, 14.
15.
q Lev. xi. 7. Is.
li. 12. lxxvi. 3.
Matt. viii. 30.
33. Mark v. 11
-13.

33 Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

r Job i. 10. Ps.
lxxvi. 11. John
xix. 11. 1 John
iv. 4.
s 1 Kings xii. 12.
28. Job i. 12. i.
6. Rev. xx. 7.
John viii. 44.
1 Pet. v. 8. Rev.
ix. 11.

34 When they that fed ^t them saw what was done, ^u they fled, and went and told ^v it in the city, and in the country.

t Matt. viii. 33.
xxviii. 11. Mark
v. 14. Acts xiv.
16, 17.

35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, ^x and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, ^y sitting at the feet of Jesus, ^z clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

x Ps. xlix. 24, 25.
Job i. 12. Heb. ii.
14, 15. 1 John
iii. 9.
y 1 Th. ii. 9, 20.
Mark v. 15.
Acts xxi. 3.
z 27. xx. 17.

36 They also which saw ^a it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

a 28. v. 8. Deut.
v. 25. 1 Sam.
vi. 20. 2 Sam.
vi. 9, 9. 1 Kings
xviii. 18. Job xxx.
16. 15. Matt.
viii. 34. Mark
v. 17. Acts xvi.
32. xxi. 2-4.
b ix. 5-56. x. 10,
11, 16.

37 Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about, ^b besought him to depart from them: for they were taken with great fear. ^c And he went up into the ship, and returned back again.

c 28. 37. Ps. xxvii.
4. xxxvi. 7. Mark
v. 18. Phil. i. 23.
d Ex. xii. 25-27.
xiii. 9, 14-16.
Ps. lxxv. 17, 18.
lxxviii. 3-6.
cxvii. 21, 22, 31,
32. cxli. 2-4.
lxxvi. 7-13.
Mark v. 19, 20.
Acts ix. 13-16.
Gal. i. 23, 24.
1 Tim. i. 13-16.
cxvii. 15-18.
Deut. x. 21. Ps.
lxxvi. 16. xxvii.
2, 3. Dan. ix. 1.
31-37.
Mark i. 45.
John iv. 29.

38 Now the man, out of whom the devils were departed, ^c besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, ^d saying,

39 Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, ^e and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.

V. 22—25. (Notes, Matt. viii. 23—27. Mark iv. 35—41.) *Where is, &c?* The disciples had faith indeed, but it was not in exercise, when most wanted: as if a soldier should leave his arms in his tent, when he marched out to battle. 'Where is your sword? Where is your shield?' must be the general question.

V. 26—39. (Notes, Matt. viii. 28—34. Mark v. 1—20.) *The deep.* The abyss, the prison, in which many of these fallen spirits are detained; and to which some, who may, like these, have been permitted for a while to range at large, are sometimes by divine justice and power remanded. (Doddridge.) (Marg. Ref.) The first request of the devil to Christ was, "I beseech thee torment me not." "Art thou come to torment

"me before my time?" (Matt. viii. 29;) 'expressing the devil's fear, that by this coming of Christ, he should presently be cast into the chains of hell; and confined to those torments, which he thought belonged not to him till the day of judgment: and the next was in plain words not to send him to hell.' (Hammond.) (Marg. Ref.) He suffered them. (32.) 'But why did Christ grant this to him? Partly to show himself the sovereign Lord of all; partly to punish the Gadarenes for their manifest contempt of the divine law; and finally to show the folly of ungodly men, in preferring their filthy swine to their own salvation.' (Beza.) *City.* (39.) Gadara was one of the cities of Decapolis, part of which lay on the one side, and part on the other side of the sea of

40 ¶ And it came to pass, ' that when Jesus returned, ' the people ^{gladly} received him: ' for they were all ' waiting for him.

41 And, behold, ' there came a man named Jairus, and he was ^a ruler of the synagogue; ' and he fell down at Jesus' feet, ^m and besought him that he would come into his house :

42 For he had ^a one only daughter, about twelve years of age, ' and she lay a dying. (^p But as he went the people thronged him.

43 And a woman, ' having an issue of blood ' twelve years, which ^a had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

44 Came ' behind him, and ^u touched the border of his garment : ' and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd.

45 And Jesus said, Who touched me ? When all denied, Peter, and they that were with him, said, Master, ^v the multitude throng thee, and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me ?

46 And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me : ' for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

47 And when the woman saw that she was not hid, ' she came trembling, and falling down before him, ^b she declared

unto him before all the people, for ' what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately :

48 And he said unto her, ' Daughter, be of good comfort : ' thy faith hath made thee whole ; ' go in peace.)

49 While ' he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead ; ' trouble not the Master.

50 But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not : ' believe only, and she shall be made whole.

51 And when he came into the house, ' he suffered no man to go in, ^k save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

52 And ' all wept, and bewailed her : but he said, Weep not ; ^m she is not dead, but sleepeth.

53 And they ' laughed him to scorn, ' knowing that she was dead.

54 And ^p he put them all out, and ' took her by the hand, and called, saying, ' Maid, arise.

55 And ^a her spirit came again, and she arose straightway : ' and he commanded to give her meat.

56 And her parents were astonished : but ' he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

Tiberias. Gadara suffered great extremities from the Romans, under the command of Vespasian.

V. 40—56. (Notes, Mark v. 21—43. Marg. Ref.)

—One only daughter. (42.) This affecting circumstance is not mentioned by the other evangelists. (Note, vii. 11—17.) Neither could be cured. The force and inveteracy of this afflicted woman's disease baffled all the skill of the physicians ; so that, besides all additional sufferings from the medicines and means in vain used for her recovery, the expense had added poverty to her other calamities, and her case appeared altogether hopeless, as to this world. The extreme distress to which several of those who were healed by our Lord had been previously reduced, and the length of time during which they had suffered, are frequently noted by the sacred writers, both to illustrate his tender compassion of our miseries, and our desperate condition as sinners, without his most gracious and powerful interposition. (Marg. Ref.) All out, &c. (54.) All the multitude, all but the apostles and the parents of the damsel. —Her spirit, &c. (55.) This expression, thus used of one before dead, strongly implies, that at death the immortal soul exists separately, but returns and is re-united to the body, when raised from the dead. (1 Kings xvii. 21.) Commanded, &c. The life of the damsel, though restored by miracle, was to be preserved in the usual

manner. This showed that she was recovered to health also, and that she wanted food, which, during her extreme illness, had not been the case.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—25.

The ministers of Christ should copy his example of assiduity and earnestness, in preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom of God, and in submitting to any hardship or degradation in outward circumstances, which may conduce to the success of the Gospel ; and they, who have profited by their labours, ought to imitate these pious women, and to use their substance in ministering unto Christ, by supporting his indigent servants and disciples, as occasion may require, and according to their ability. In this way, as well as in many others, they may bring forth fruit with patience, and evince that the grace of God hath indeed made their hearts honest and good, and prepared them to receive the good seed of his word ; for it has taken effectual root, and will certainly ripen to a glorious harvest. Indeed, we should aim, by every method, to discriminate our character and conduct from those of mere careless hearers, of superficial and temporary professors, and of such as are choked with the cares, riches, and pleasures of this

CHAP. IX.

Jesus sends forth the twelve apostles, 1—6.

Herod desires to see him, 7—9. The apostles return; he retires with them, but the multitudes follow him, 10, 11. He feeds them by miracle, 12—17. The different opinions concerning him, and Peter's confession, 18—21. He foretells his death, and warns his disciples to prepare for self-denial and sufferings, 22—27. He is transfigured, 28—36: heals a demoniac, 37—42; again foretells his death, 43—45; checks the ambitious disputes of his disciples, 46—48; will not allow them to forbid any who cast out devils in his name, 49, 50; reproves the fiery zeal of James and John against the Samaritans, who would not receive them, 51—56; and answers some, who were not disposed to follow him unreservedly and immediately, 57—62.

ev. 13—16. Mat.
x. 2—5. Mark
iii. 14—19. vi.
7—13
b. x. 14. Matt. x.
1. xxi. 19. Mark
vi. 7. xvi. 17, 18.
John xiv. 12.
Acts i. 8. iii. 16.
iv. 30. ix. 34.

THEN ^ahe called his twelve disciples together, and ^bgave them power and

authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

2 And he sent them ^cto preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

3 And he said unto them, ^dTake nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have ^etwo coats apiece.

4 And ^fwhatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.

5 And ^gwhosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, ^hshake off the very dust from your feet for ⁱa testimony against them.

6 And they departed, and went through the towns, ^kpreaching the gospel, and healing every where.

7 ^lNow ^mHerod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and ⁿhe was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead;

8 And ^oof some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again.

9 And Herod said, ^pJohn have I be- ^q

x. 11. xvi. 16.
Mark. iii. 2. x. 7.
xiii. 12. xxi. 14.
Mark i. 14, 15.
xvi. 15. Heb. ii.
3. 4.

d. x. 4. xxi. 36. Ps.
xxviii. 3. Matt.
x. 9, 10. Mark
vi. 7. 2 Tim.
ii. 4.

e. iii. 11. vi. 23.
xii. 23.
f. x. 5—8. Mat.
x. 11. Mark vi. 10.
Acts xvi. 12.

g. 48. x. 10—12.
16. Matt. x. 14.
15. Mark vi. 11.
18. 37. Acts xiii.
51. xvi. 6.
h. 53—56. Neh. v.
13.

i. v. 14. Matt. x.
18.
k. 1, 2. Mark vi.
12. 13. xvi. 20.
Acts iv. 30 v.
16.

l. Job xvi. 11. 12.
Ps. lxxviii. 12.
Matt. xiv. 1—19.
Mark vi. 14. 28.
m. xxi. 25. lxxviii.
5. Mic. vii. 4.

n. 10. Matt. xvi.
10. Mark vi. 19.
viii. 23. John i.
21.

“life, and bring no fruit to perfection.” Nor is it enough for us, “not to hold the truth in unrighteousness;” we should desire to hold forth the word of life, and to shine in our several circles, as a lighted candle in the room, for the benefit of all around. Thus professing and recommending the truths of the Gospel, by our conduct and conversation, we shall receive more and more from our gracious God; whilst many, that *seemed to have knowledge, abilities, and possessions, not having had grace to make a proper use of them, will shortly be deprived of them all; and their poverty, folly, and worthlessness, which before were kept secret, shall be made known to all the world.* Happy are they, “who hear the word of God, “and keep it:” these are the Redeemer’s beloved friends and relations; every storm that arises, every peril that distrains them, will tend to excite their fervent prayers; and their Lord will awake for their help and deliverance, and cause the trial to terminate in their increasing admiration of his power and love. Yet at times even true believers seem to have mislaid their faith, or left it behind them; as they have so many anxious fears about the event, when they are following Christ in the path of duty!

V. 26—56.

Our own observation and experience may convince us, that the effects of sin, and of Satan’s malice, fill the earth with misery; but let us advert to the varied displays of the Redeemer’s power to counteract this fatal tendency. If he has delivered our souls from the power of the devil, and brought us to sit at his feet in our right mind to hear his word, and to desire to be with him, he will preserve us

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from falling again under the dominion of sin; he will remove or sanctify our bodily sickness, and give us the comfort of his forgiving love; he will support us under domestic afflictions, and do us good by them; he will deliver us from the fear of death, and at length make us more than conquerors even over this king of terrors. Let us then declare what great things our God and Saviour hath done for us; let us commit all our concerns into his hands, and apply to him for help in all our difficulties; and let us endeavour to imitate his compassion and unwearied activity in doing good. But we be to them, who bid Jesus depart from them, through fear of worldly loss, or from love to sin! He will not stay with those who thus slight him, and perhaps may return to them no more; for others are glad to receive him, being waiting for him: and none but Jesus can save them from the wrath of God, or the power of Satan, or give them effectual help in the time of trouble, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX. V. 1—6. (Notes, Matt. x. Mark vi. 7—13.) The apostles had both the power of working miracles, and authority over evil spirits, immediately from Christ himself, in whom it was originally inherent, as One with the Father, as “God manifest in the flesh.” The miracles of mercy wrought by them proved their doctrine to be the word of God, and illustrated its benign and salutary tendency; and their holy doctrine, calling men to repent of sin and turn to God, and welcome the Saviour, promised in the scriptures, demonstrated that their miracles were wrought by the power of God, whose word they established. (Notes, Deut. xiii. Matt. xii. 24—30.)

headed: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? ^a And he desired to see him.

10 ¶ And ^a the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And ^r he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place, belonging to the city, called ^a Bethsaida.

11 And the people, ^t when they knew ^{it}, followed him: ^u and he received them, and spake unto them ^x of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

12 And ^y when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, ^z Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: ^a for we are here in a desert place.

13 But he said unto them, ^b Give ye them to eat. And they said, ^c We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people.

14 For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, ^d Make them sit down by fifties in a company.

15 And they did so, and made them all sit down.

16 Then he took the five loaves, and ^e he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.

17 And they did ^f eat, and were all filled: ^g and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them, twelve baskets.

18 ¶ And it came to pass, ^h as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, ⁱ Whom say the people that I am?

19 They answering, said, ^j John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others say, That one of the ^k old prophets is risen again.

20 He said unto them, But ^l whom say ye that I am? Peter answering, said, ^m The Christ of God.

21 And ⁿ he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing;

22 Saying, ^o The son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

23 And he said to them all, ^p If any man will come after me, let him ^q deny himself, and take up his cross ^r daily, and follow me.

24 For whosoever ^s will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

25 For ^t what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or ^u be cast away?

26 For ^v whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, ^w of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, ^x when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

27 But ^y I tell you of a truth, There be ^z some standing here, which shall not ^a taste of death till they ^b see the kingdom of God.

V. 7—9. (Notes, Matt. xiv. 1—14. Mark vi. 14—29.) Herod was perplexed and uneasy at the report of Christ's miracles, and concurred in the opinion of those, who said that "John was risen from the dead;" yet he desired to see him, in order to ascertain the truth of this opinion, or in hopes to disprove a report which gave him much alarm.

V. 10—17. (Notes, Matt. xiv. 15—21. Mark vi. 30—44. John vi. 1—14. Marg. Ref.) 'They shall lack nothing that follow Christ; no, not in the wilderness.' (Beza.)

V. 18—27. (Notes, Matt. xvi. 13—23. Mark viii. 27—33. ix. 1. Alone. (18.)) 'That is, apart from the multitude. Whom say, &c. (20.)' 'Though the world fluctuates amidst various errors, the truth must not on that account be despised, but rather the knowledge of it should be the more diligently sought, and the profession of it made with the greater constancy.' (Beza.) Deny himself. (23.) Self-denial, among other things, requires us to renounce all those advantages, and risk all those sufferings, which arise from the favour or enmity of men. 'Although the yearning bowels of a tender mother, or the gray hairs of an indulgent father, should be pleaded as motives to induce me to break the least command of the holy Jesus; though the authority of civil, natural, or ecclesiastical superiors should tempt me to do what Christ forbids; though this authority should allure me with proffers of the highest honours or rewards, or should endeavour to afflict me with the severest menaces, yet, if all these considerations should prevail with me to gratify myself and them, by doing that which my own conscience, and God's word, assures me will be dis-

p xlii 21, 32; xlii 2

o x 12; Zech i 10, 11; Mark vi 50; Heb xiii 17

r Matt vi 12, 13; Mark vi 51, 52

s Matt xi 42; John i 31

t Matt xiv 14; Mark vi 35, 36; ix 18, 1; John 18 34; Rom xvi 2; 1 Tim iv 2; xvi 1, 10; Mat xvi 31, 43

y Matt xiv 15, 16; Mark vi 35, 36; John vi 7, 8; Mat xv 32, 33

a Ps lxxviii 19, 20

b 2 Kings iv 42, 43; Matt xiv 17, 18; Mark vi 27, 30; John vi 7, 8

c Mark vi 29, 40; vii 6

d Matt xiv 15; Mark vi 41

e f xxi 12; xxviii 30; Matt xvi 36; John vi 1, 2

g h i Cor xi 26; 1 Cor xiv 16

j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50

28 ¶ And it came to pass, ^a about an eight days after these ^{*} sayings, ^b he took Peter, and John, and James, and went up ^c into a mountain to pray.

29 And, as he prayed, ^k the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering.

30 And, behold, there talked with him two men, ^l which were Moses and Elias :

31 Who ^a appeared in glory, and ^o spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

32 But Peter, and they that were with him, ^p were heavy with sleep : and when they were awake, ^q they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

33 And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, ^r it is good for us to be here : ^s and let us make three tabernacles ; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias : not knowing what he said.

34 While he thus spake, ^t there came a cloud, and overshadowed them : ^u and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, ^v This is my beloved Son ; ^w hear him.

36 And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. ^x And they kept ^y it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

'pleasing to my Saviour, or opposite to his commands. 'it is evident that I regard myself, or them, more than I do my Saviour, and therefore am unworthy of him, and cannot be sincerely his disciple.' (Whitby.) This learned writer proceeds, in the same energetic manner, to show, particularly, how self-denial requires the same decision and firmness against solicitation, allurements, and upbraiding complaints, from wives, children, and other relations, where obedience to Christ is concerned, as well as denying the cravings of our own pride, ambition, love of money, pleasure, ease : by willingly enduring reproach, contempt, poverty, imprisonment, or tortures, nay, death itself, when these things cannot be shunned, except by denying, disobeying, or dishonouring our Redeemer. Daily. 'Great' is the emphasis of this word, which indeed implies, that 'as day succee-eth day, so would one cross follow another,' (Beza.) *Lose himself, &c.* (25.) This must mean final perdition. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 28—36. (Notes, Matt. xvii. 1—9. Mark ix. 1—10.) 'Lest the disciples should be offended at his humiliation in the flesh, Christ teaches them that it was voluntary, withal showing them for a space his celestial glory and majesty.' (Beza.) *His decease.* (31.) 2 Pet.

was found alone. ^z And they kept ^y it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

37 ¶ And it came to pass, ^a that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met them.

38 And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, ^b look upon my son ; ^c for he is mine only child :

39 And, ^d lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out ; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and, bruising him, hardly departeth from him.

40 And I besought thy disciples to cast him out ; ^e and they could not.

41 And Jesus answering, said, ^f O faithless and ^g perverse generation ! ^h how long shall I be with you, ⁱ and suffer you ? ^j Bring thy son hither.

42 And as he was yet a coming, ^k the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, ^l and delivered him again to his father.

43 And they were all ^m amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples,

44 Let ⁿ these sayings sink down into your ears : ^o for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.

i. 15. *Gr.*) The subject of the conversation on the holy mount, mentioned only by this evangelist, shows that the atonement of Christ's death was the great object to which Moses and the prophets, rightly understood, directed mankind. They, as well as John Baptist and the apostles, in fact, say, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (Marg. Ref.)

V. 37—44. (Notes, Matt. xvii. 14—21. Mark ix. 14—29.) (Marg. Ref.) *Mine only, &c.* This evangelist particularly notices these circumstances in a single word, or clause, yet in a manner suited to touch the heart, and awaken the most tender sympathy in the reader. (Note, vii. 11—17.) (39.) "And behold a spirit seizeth him. "and suddenly the youth crieth out, and the spirit teareth him till he foameth, and bruising him, hardly departeth from him." In this rendering, which is literal, except as the proper nominative to each verb is added instead of the relative, what the evil spirit, and what in consequence the youth did, are distinguished ; and this is of considerable importance, in order to show more clearly that it was a real possession. *The mighty power, &c.* (43.) *Cr.* "the majesty of God," which was displayed by Jesus in this miracle, according to what he says, "He that hath

45 But ^a they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.

46 ¶ Then there ^a arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.

47 And Jesus, ^a perceiving the thought of their heart, ^t took a child, and set him by him,

48 And said unto them, ^a Whosoever shall receive this child in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth him that sent me: for ^x he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

49 And John answered, and said, Master, ^v we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.

50 And Jesus said unto him, ^z Forbid him not: ^a for he that is not against us is for us.

51 ¶ And it came to pass, when the time was come ^b that he should be received up, ^c he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,

52 And ^d sent messengers before his face: ^e and they went, and entered into a village of ^f the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

53 And ^e they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

54 And when his disciples, James and John, saw *this*, they said, Lord, ^b wilt thou that we command ^f fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

55 But he turned, ^k and rebuked them, and said, ^l Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

56 For ^m the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. ⁿ And they went to another village.

"seen me, hath seen the Father."—*Sink deep, &c.* (44.) Or "Place these things in your ears." ^a Let them still ^b sound in your ears, and let no subsequent event cause ^c you to forget them: for a very different scene will soon ^d open. We have no reason to promise ourselves tranquillity; seeing they who at one time extol Christ, not long ^e after crucify him. (*Beza.*) (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 45. ^a They understood the words; but knew not ^b how to reconcile them with their own traditions, that ^c their Messiah should live for ever, or with the great ^d things they expected from him; and therefore, in after ^e ages, they^f (the unbelieving Jews,) ^g invented the distinction of Messiah Ben Joseph, (or the son of Joseph who ^h was to die,) and Messiah Ben David, who was to triumph ⁱ and live for ever. (*Whitby.*) (*Note, Mark ix. 30—32. Marg. Ref.*)

V. 46—50. (*Notes, Matt. xviii. 1—6. Mark ix. 33—41.*) ^a Their words, spoken among themselves, could ^b not escape him, who knew their thoughts, or reasonings. ^c—*Forbid, &c.* ^d In extraordinary cases, we should ^e not rashly either condemn or approve. (*Beza.*) This is an observation of no little importance: for nothing is more common than precipitate and harsh condemnations of extraordinary revivals in religion, when it afterwards appears that God was eminently prospering his Gospel, by those who followed not with these rash censurers; except it be an indiscriminate sanctioning of all the appearances on these occasions as *divine*, when the event shows, that human infirmity and depravity, and Satan's artifice, in various ways concurred to disgrace, if possible, and stop the good work of the Holy Spirit. To wait to examine and observe, and impartially to distinguish between what is scriptural and what is unscriptural, in these extraor-

dinary events, and not to give an opinion till the whole be maturely weighed, so as to leave but little danger, either of condemning the work of God, or of sanctioning the delusions of the devil, is a chief point of heavenly wisdom.

V. 51—56. The evangelist seems, in the conclusion of this chapter, to have recorded several detached incidents of similar import, which occurred at different times; it is not therefore needful to conclude, that the remainder of his Gospel relates to events, which took place during Christ's last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, or subsequent to it. The expression here is very remarkable: "When the time was come that he should be received up," which must relate to his ascension to his glory in heaven, "he steadfastly set his face to go up to Jerusalem." He had "the joy set before him" continually in his eye, and his sufferings and crucifixion were regarded merely as preparatory steps to it; and therefore he steadfastly and constantly set his face to go up to Jerusalem, though he perfectly knew all that there awaited him; nor would he be induced by any persuasions to defer his journey. As he went along, he sent some of his disciples before him, to make things ready for his reception, in the several places through which he passed; but when they came to a village of the Samaritans, the inhabitants would not entertain him in their houses, or admit him into the town; because they found by his route that he was on his journey to Jerusalem. They had doubtless heard of his miracles, and doctrine, (*John iv.*;) and probably were displeased at his protesting against their schismatical worship on mount Gerizim, by going up to Jerusalem to worship. This repulse, though not attended by any further ill usage, so excited the indignation of James and John, that they desired permission to call for fire from heaven upon the Samaritans; as Elijah,

57 ¶ And it came to pass, that as they went in the way, ^o a certain *man* said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

58 And ^p Jesus said unto him, ^q Foxes have holes, and birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

59 And he said unto another, ^r Follow me: But he said, Lord, ^s suffer me first to go and bury my father.

60 Jesus said unto him, ^t Let the dead bury their dead; ^u but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; ^x but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house.

62 And Jesus said unto him, ^y No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

(perhaps near the same place,) had done on those who were sent by king Ahaziah to apprehend him, (*Notes, 2 Kings i.*) and they had no doubt but that it would be sent at their command. But they did not consider the immensely different circumstances of the two cases. The Samaritans were indeed highly blameable, but their conduct was the effect rather of national prejudices and bigotry, than of determined enmity to the word and worship of God; and though they refused to entertain Christ and his disciples, yet they did not attempt to persecute or murder them, according to the conduct of idolatrous Ahaziah towards the prophet Elijah; so that there was no occasion for such a terrible execution, either to vindicate the honour of God, or to secure his servants from their enemies. Neither were the disciples aware of the different dispensation that was about to be introduced, which would chiefly be characterized by miracles of beneficence. Above all, they were not duly sensible of the prevailing state of their own hearts; they supposed themselves to be actuated by a zeal for the honour of their Lord, but pride, ambition, bitter resentment, and bigotry, in reality, instigated them to make so improper a request. For, when the inhabitants of Nazareth behaved far worse to Jesus than these Samaritans did, they had not thought of taking such revenge on them; but they, and others who slighted or injured Jesus, were *Jews*, and therefore the disciples were more disposed to bear it from *them*, than from the despised and detested Samaritans. Elijah, on the contrary, was actuated by a zeal for the honour of God, and a regard to the real good of his people, who were about to be ruined by the abominable idolatries and persecutions of Ahab's family; so that they, whom the fire from heaven consumed at his word, fell sacrifices to the justice of God, and their death tended to the benefit of Israel; whereas, had these Samaritans been destroyed, they would have been sacrificed to the disciples' prejudices and resentment, and the consequences would have been injurious both to Jews and Samaritans. Our Lord, therefore, sharply rebuked the disciples, assuring them, that "they knew not what manner of spirit they were of;" they were not aware under what influence they spake, or what dispositions predominated in them; for they desired to destroy the lives of their enemies, instead of overcoming them with persevering kindness. Whereas he, the Son of man, was come to preserve men's lives, as well as to save their souls; his Gospel was not to be propagated by fire and sword, but by more rational and beneficent means; and the tendency of

it would be to terminate such furious contests as far as it truly prevailed. Accordingly, without any dispute with the Samaritans, he led the disciples forward to another village. What our Lord said against calling for fire from heaven upon the Samaritans, is still more forcibly conclusive against every kind and degree of persecution. The Samaritans were really schismatics and heretics, and they openly rejected Christ himself. Whatever, therefore, has been urged concerning the tendency of penalties and severities, to reclaim heretics and schismatics, or to prevent others from joining them, and to preserve the unity of the Church, or the honour of its ministers; indeed, every topic that persecutors, whether popish or protestant, have urged, or can urge, on this subject, is shown by our Lord's answer to be perfectly nugatory: and they who plead for the necessity of secular authority to promote religion, "know not what manner of spirit they are of." It is also to be considered, that it is one thing to appeal to God, and wait his decision, whether he will miraculously interpose, which was all that the apostles required; and another, and a very different thing indeed, to take the cause out of his hands, and to execute vengeance on opposers, by the arm of man, and according to his sentence, without any possibility of certainly knowing that God approves what we are doing.

V. 57—62. (*Notes, Matt. viii. 19—22.*) Some of these incidents seem to have occurred early in our Lord's ministry; the last we have not before met with. The desire of this person to go home, and bid farewell to his friends, and to settle his temporal concerns, before he attached himself to Christ as his constant follower, was no doubt the effect of a wavering and undetermined state of mind; Jesus therefore answered his request, by applying to his case a proverbial expression which seems to have been frequently used. If a man should put his hand to the plough, and then look behind him, he could not make his furrows straight and of a proper depth; thus no one can be expected to transact any business in a proper manner, if his attention be fixed upon some other object. No man therefore can be fit to be a preacher of the Gospel, whose heart hankereth after those worldly interests or pleasures which he hath left behind, and who looketh back with a desire of recovering them, even when outwardly employed in the work of the Lord. The proverb applies to the subjects, as well as to the ministers, of the kingdom of God; but the latter seem especially intended. (*Marg. Ref.*)

CHAP. X.

Jesus sends out seventy disciples to work miracles and preach; and pronounces a wo against Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, 1—16. The seventy return with joy at their success; and Christ instructs them in what to rejoice, 17—20. He adores the Father, for revealing his gospel to the simple only; and declares his own personal and medi-

atorial authority and glory, 21, 22, and the happiness of his disciples, 23, 24. A lawyer inquires what he must do to inherit eternal life; and Jesus refers him to the law of God, 25—28; and shows him by the example of a good Samaritan, who was his neighbour, 29—37. He commends Mary's attention to his doctrine, and reproves Martha, who was "cumbered about much serving;" 38—42.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—27.

The Lord Jesus is the Fountain of power and authority, to whom all creatures must in one way or other be subjected: and if he accompany the word of his ministers with efficacy, to deliver sinners from Satan's bondage, they need not fear but he will procure them needful sustenance, and more they ought not to desire. They should always show a kind attention to the temporal comforts of mankind, while they seek their eternal salvation; and when this is attended with an evident indifference to their own ease and accommodation, it tends much to conciliate goodwill: if they can therefore, by ordinary means, do any thing to relieve their distresses and heal their diseases, it may help to promote the success of their ministry. But when truth and love in this manner go hand in hand, and the message of God is yet rejected and despised, it will leave men most inexcusable, and every circumstance will turn to a testimony against them. The increase of faithful ministers, and the success of the Gospel, frequently cause great perplexity and distress to those who have set themselves to oppose the cause of God: and they, who have shed innocent blood, will often have their guilt brought to remembrance, with renewed terror and dismay, as long as they live; yea, to all eternity. Whilst the blessed Jesus consults the benefit and comfort of his disciples, and readily receives all who come to him; healing those that feel their need of it, and feeding all who hunger for the Bread of life, let us learn to communicate liberally to the necessities of our brethren: and, even if poor ourselves, to share our mean and scanty morsel with those who are in more urgent and immediate want. By the blessing of God, a little will in this use of it go far, and we shall never be thus impoverished. After our Lord's example also, ministers, parents, and heads of families, should pray *with*, as well as *for*, those who are intrusted to their care: and their retired conversation should be attended by social devotions, which would render it as profitable as public ordinances. They, who are established in one important doctrine of the Gospel, will be prepared to understand others connected with it: and those truths which relate to the person, the sufferings, and the mediatorial kingdom of Christ, form the very substance of centre of true religion. In meditating on his crucifixion, and the glory which ensued, we shall not learn to deny ourselves and to bear our cross *stilly*: we shall thus be induced to renounce the friendship, and venture the enmity, of the world: we shall in this glass

see the folly and madness of seeking the largest temporal advantages, with the hazard of "losing ourselves and "being cast away;" and we shall get the victory over that foolish and wicked shame, which causes many to forsake and disobey Christ, against the convictions of their own consciences, though he hath declared, that "he will be "ashamed" of all such, "when he shall come in his own "glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels."

V. 28—45.

To form some faint conception of the Redeemer's glory, now in heaven, and at his future appearance to judge the world, let us contemplate him upon the mount, "when the fashion of his countenance was altered, and "his raiment was white and glistening." With this scene before our eyes, we may meditate to advantage on "his decease, which he accomplished at Jerusalem;" and thence follow him with our thoughts to his present exaltation in heaven, where he is surrounded with his saints, who there appear with him in glory, and expatiate in his praises. This may reconcile us to our present trials, and prepare us for the stroke of death, that we may go to behold and share that glory, one glimpse of which hath sometimes made us say, "It is good for us to be here." But we must now walk by faith, and hear obediently the words of the beloved Son of God; treasuring up every comfortable experience of his love, and every discovery of his majesty and excellency, to be our support in the days of darkness. Thus we may maintain a successful conflict with the enemies of our souls: and in the exercise of a vigorous faith, we may hope to be instrumental in rescuing others from their destructive influence. But if we would be useful to others, we must seek to have our own minds delivered from every prejudice: and when we find ourselves unable to understand the words of Christ, we should not fear, or neglect, to ask him, and to consult his more experienced servants concerning them.

V. 46—56.

Alas! our reasonings and discussions, (instead of being directed to mutual edification,) are too often mere disputes, "which of us should be the greatest?" This may be, and in general is, very speciously disguised: but applause, popularity, and precedence, are too much aimed at by professed Christians, and even by ministers. These thoughts

AFTER ^a these things, the Lord appointed other ^b seventy also, and sent them ^c two and two before his face, into every city and place, ^d whither he himself would come.

2 Therefore said he unto them, ^e The harvest truly is great, but ^f the labourers are few: ^g pray ye therefore ^h the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

3 Go your ways: behold, ⁱ I send you forth as lambs among ^j wolves.

4 Carry ^k neither purse, nor scrip, nor

shoes: ^l and salute no man by the way.

5 And ^m into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.

6 And if ⁿ the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, ^o it shall turn to you again.

7 And ^p in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: ^q for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and ^r they receive you, ^s eat such things as are set before you;

9 And ^t heal the sick that are therein;

10 And ^u say to every city and to every

place, ^v Peace be to thee.

11 And he said unto them, I am sending you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves:

12 Therefore shall ye be as serpents, and shall not be as asses.

13 But whoso shall smite you on the cheek, turn to him the other also.

14 And whoso shall take away thy cloak, forbear with him: for whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: but whoso shall lose his life for my sake, shall save it.

15 For whosoever will be a saviour of his soul, shall lose it: but whosoever shall deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me, shall save his soul.

16 For whosoever will be a saviour of his soul, shall lose it: but whosoever shall deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me, shall save his soul.

17 For whosoever will be a saviour of his soul, shall lose it: but whosoever shall deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me, shall save his soul.

18 For whosoever will be a saviour of his soul, shall lose it: but whosoever shall deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me, shall save his soul.

19 For whosoever will be a saviour of his soul, shall lose it: but whosoever shall deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me, shall save his soul.

20 For whosoever will be a saviour of his soul, shall lose it: but whosoever shall deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me, shall save his soul.

21 For whosoever will be a saviour of his soul, shall lose it: but whosoever shall deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me, shall save his soul.

22 For whosoever will be a saviour of his soul, shall lose it: but whosoever shall deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me, shall save his soul.

23 For whosoever will be a saviour of his soul, shall lose it: but whosoever shall deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me, shall save his soul.

24 For whosoever will be a saviour of his soul, shall lose it: but whosoever shall deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me, shall save his soul.

25 For whosoever will be a saviour of his soul, shall lose it: but whosoever shall deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me, shall save his soul.

26 For whosoever will be a saviour of his soul, shall lose it: but whosoever shall deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me, shall save his soul.

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shoes: ^a and salute no man by the way.

5 And ^b into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.

6 And if ^c the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, ^d it shall turn to you again.

7 And ^e in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: ^f for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and ^g they receive you, ^h eat such things as are set before you;

9 And ⁱ heal the sick that are therein;

10 And ^j say to every city and to every

place, ^k Peace be to thee.

11 And he said unto them, I am sending you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves:

12 Therefore shall ye be as serpents, and shall not be as asses.

13 But whoso shall smite you on the cheek, turn to him the other also.

14 And whoso shall take away thy cloak, forbear with him: for whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, shall save it.

15 For whosoever will be a saviour of his soul, shall lose it: but whosoever shall deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me, shall save his soul.

16 For whosoever will be a saviour of his soul, shall lose it: but whosoever shall deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me, shall save his soul.

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35 For whosoever will be a saviour of his soul, shall lose it: but whosoever shall deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me, shall save his soul.

of our foolish hearts Jesus perceives; and a little child is his constant emblem, by which to teach us simplicity and humility. But if indeed we are his disciples, we need not be ambitious of any further honour: for not only are apostles, prophets, and evangelists, distinguished persons; but the least of the whole company of believers, though insignificant among his brethren as an infant, and as much disregarded by them in all their concerns, is and shall be great, as a child and friend of God, an heir of heaven, and a future companion and compeer to the angels before the throne. "Such honour have all his saints;" and as every one, who, in any place or form, successfully preaches "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ," is instrumental in bringing the slaves of Satan to partake of these glorious and everlasting privileges, surely we should not pretend to forbid them, "to cast out devils in Christ's name, because they follow not with us;" lest he rebuke us for our officiousness, and remind us, that "he who is not against us is for us." But whilst we are zealous, courageous, and patient to endure hardship in the work of the Lord, let us also look well to our own spirits, lest we be betrayed into dishonourable measures, and disgrace the cause which we mean to promote. It is easy for us to say, "Come, see my zeal for the Lord," and obvious for us to think that we are remarkably faithful in his cause, when in fact we are inflamed with resentment, impatient of contradiction, seeking our own honour, and doing harm instead of good. Nay, we may be so zealous against the errors, prejudices, superstitions, and bigotry of others, as to fall into the same evils ourselves; and so to sanction all their calumnies and injuries. How strange is it, that the professed disciples of that Saviour who thus decidedly blamed the proposal of calling for fire from heaven to consume the adversaries, should think of kindling fires on earth for that purpose! or of promoting the Gospel, and destroying schismatics and heretics, by wars and massacres! *Fire from heaven* might indeed have proved the doctrine to be true, and thus might have in some measure tended to the conviction of opposers; but fire and faggot can only prove the diabolical malice and cruelty of those who use them; and if the truth itself were supported by such means, it would be-

come suspected of being from beneath. Yet many, who seem upon the whole to be upright, are led to indulge the same spirit in another way: and their sarcasms and calumnies against those who differ from them, and other bitter fruits of pride and resentment, too plainly show, that "they know not what manner of spirit they are of." Many controversial books, many religious conversations, nay, many sermons, demonstrate to the impartial judge, that much is wrong in the temper of the parties concerned, though perhaps they are not aware of it. It behooves us therefore to beg of the Lord, that he would convince us of our sin; and that he would rather rebuke and chasten us, than leave us to indulge unchristian tempers; and thus to act contrary both to his precepts, his example, the end of his coming into the world, and to the tendency of his holy religion.

V. 57—62.

In following Christ we should count our cost: worldly riches and pleasures cannot reasonably be expected from Him, who, when on earth, "had not where to lay his head:" and in that cause, for which he shed his blood, we should be ready to renounce all secular interests, and to forego even relative endearments, that we may preach or promote the kingdom of God. No man is therefore fit for the ministry of the Gospel, whose eye and heart are fixed on worldly objects: for he will either leave his work to return to them; or he will neglect it, and do it in an improper manner, by hankering after them. This should be seriously laid to heart by all who intend to engage in that important service, as well as by those who are already employed in it. Many lay hold of this sacred function, whilst their affections are fixed upon the riches, honours, and pleasures of the world; nay, whilst they are scheming to render their ministry itself subservient to the gratification of avarice, ambition, or sensuality! But no one would employ a man to plough his lands, who neglected his work, or performed it in so bungling a manner as these men do their sacred services: as therefore they are not fit for the work of the kingdom of God on earth, they will assuredly not be found meet for the inheritance of the kingdom of God in heaven.

21 In that hour * Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, * I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that * thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast * revealed them unto babes: * even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

22 * All * things are delivered to me of my Father: * and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and *he* to whom the Son will reveal *him*.

23 And he turned him unto *his* disciples, and said privately, * Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see:

24 For I tell you, That * many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

25 ¶ And, behold, * a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, * Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26 He said unto him, * What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27 And he answering said, * Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; * and thy neighbour as thyself.

28 And he said unto him, * Thou hast answered right: * this do, and thou shalt live,

29 But he, * willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, * And who is my neighbour?

30 And Jesus answering, said, A certain

the power of every enemy of God and his Church; so that neither temptations, afflictions, nor persecutions, should eventually hurt them. Yet they ought not so much to rejoice that evil spirits were subjected to them, but rather "that their names were written in heaven," as the people of God and the heirs of his kingdom; for many workers of miracles would at last be condemned as wicked men, but no true believer would come short of eternal life. It cannot be supposed that Christ meant, by special revelation, to inform all these seventy persons that they were registered in heaven, as heirs of eternal life. In general, however, none can know this of themselves, except by those evidences which prove them to be born of the Spirit, and truly converted. (*Marg. Ref.*) * Christ cast out devils * by a virtue residing in himself; his disciples only in the name and by the power of their Lord. Seeing then this power accompanied them into all parts of the world, it is necessary that Christ's presence should be with them every where; now such a presence is a certain indication of the Deity. (1 Kings viii. 27. Ps. cxxxix. 7. Jer. xxiii. 24. Am. ix. 3.) Satan, being spoiled of his dominion, may be said to "fall from heaven." So, of the fall of the king of Babylon, the prophet says, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer!" Of the fall of the colleague of Antonius, Cicero says, "thou hast pulled him down from heaven." And when Pompey was overthrown, he is said by him to have fallen from the stars. (*Whitby.*)

V. 21, 22. (*Note, Matt. xi. 25-27.*) Our Lord inwardly rejoiced with a holy and spiritual joy, in the prospect of the extensive success of the Gospel, the salvation of souls, and the glory that would redound to God, both in those events themselves, and in the instruments by which they would be brought to pass. "No man knoweth who the Son is, &c." This seems not to respect what he was to do or suffer, but his nature, excellence, and dignity: as the words following, "Who the Father is," respect his nature, his divine excellence and dig-

nity, exhibited to us in the person of Jesus Christ, (*Whitby.*) * Whosoever seeks the Father without the Son, wandereth out of the way. (*Beza.*)

V. 23, 24. (*Note, Matt. xiii. 16, 17.*) Kings, as well as prophets, had desired to see the promised Messiah, and to hear his doctrine; but they died before he came.

V. 25-29. Whilst our Lord was teaching the people, a lawyer, in order to make trial of him, or to ensnare him, inquired, What he should do to inherit eternal life? (*Notes, Matt. xix. 16-22. Mark xii. 23-34.*) In answer to this question Christ referred him to the law, which he professed to study and to teach; and when he had quoted the two precepts, of loving God with all the heart, &c. and our neighbour as ourselves, (*Notes, Lev. xix. 13. Deut. vi. 4, 5.*) Jesus allowed that he had answered right; that was indeed the sum and substance of the whole law, and if he perfectly kept those two commandments, he would acquire a title to eternal life; but it was also implied, that if he had failed, or should fail, of perfect obedience, he could not possibly obtain life in this way, but must be condemned by the law as a transgressor. Of this inference he seems to have been aware; and finding himself entangled in his own net, yet being desirous to justify himself, he passed by the law of loving God with all the heart, and inquired, Who was his neighbour? For the scribes confined this term to their own nation; sect, friends, and connexions, and did not deem themselves bound to love others at all. * Being confident of his having performed the first part, the duties towards God, * by an exact performance of the ceremonies of the law, he made no question concerning that; but for the second, the love of his neighbour, he proposed * that other question. (*Hammond.*) If this was so, he, though a lawyer, "was alive without the law;" and the wisdom of our Lord's discourse with him, as exactly suited to his case, is still further illustrated: "for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (*Notes, Prov. xxvi. 4, 5.*)

P. 10. Jer. vii. 14. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.
 man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

34 And ^awent to him, and ^bbound

up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him: and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36 Which now of these three, think-est thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

V. 30-37. Our Lord did not give this inquirer a direct answer, but stated a case, and led him to answer it himself. This has generally been called a *parable*, but it is related as a *fact*, and probably was so. It is said that a great number of priests and Levites resided at Jericho, who would frequently journey to Jerusalem, and back again; and as the road lay through a desert, it was greatly infested by robbers. Now a certain man, supposed to be a Jew, being on the road to Jericho, fell into the hands of these plunderers, who stripped and wounded him, and left him half dead. Whilst he lay in this deplorable condition, a priest happened to be going on the road; yet neither natural compassion, nor regard to the duties of religion, induced him to assist his countryman, who lay perishing for want of help; but either pretending urgent business, or fearing lest he too should fall among the thieves, he passed by on the other side, regardless of his groans and misery. A Levite also, who travelled that way, came indeed and looked on him, but gave him no help. At length a Samaritan in his journey came to the place; and when he saw the poor man's perilous and pitiable case, he forgot his strong national and religious prejudices, as well as the contempt and hatred, with which the Jews in general treated the Samaritans. Being moved with compassion, he disregarded the hindrance, trouble, danger, and expense, that must be incurred by helping him; he poured the wine and oil, that he carried for his own refreshment, into his bleeding wounds, and bound them up with such linen as he had about him: having then placed him on the beast on which he rode, he conveyed him to an inn; and there took care of him during the night, as his surgeon and nurse, even as if he had been his friend and brother; and on the morrow, when his business required him to depart, he gave the host what money he could spare, and promised to repay him whatever he should further expend in taking care of him. The direct scope of this parable, or narrative, is evidently fixed by the context: it is a beautiful illustration of the law of loving our neighbour as ourselves, without regard to nation, party, or any other distinction. The Samaritan alone had acted according to the commandment; and the whole was admirably suited to lead the Scribe to understand the subject. Had a Jew been

introduced as thus relieving a distressed Samaritan, prejudice might have prevented his cordial approbation; but his feelings were so interested in the case of the Jew, that he could not but allow, that "he who showed mercy on him," was neighbour to him, and fulfilled the duty of that relation. Our Lord then sent him to imitate the Samaritan's conduct; and this conclusion was calculated, by showing him the extent and spirituality of the law; to convince him that he could not in this way obtain eternal life, as well as to direct his subsequent conduct. Some commentators explain this *supposed* parable almost exclusively of the love of Christ to sinners; but this can at best be only an instructive accommodation. Man is not only in a *pitiable state*, as if, contrary to his will, and without his fault, he had fallen under the power of Satan; but he is also a *condemned criminal*, exposed to the righteous vengeance of God, from which Christ alone can deliver him. The Priest and the Levite *could* have helped the man, if they *would*, and were very wicked in omitting to do it; but the law of God is "holy, just, and good," though it leaves the sinner to perish. At the same time Christ hath far outdone the good Samaritan: he came into the world on *purpose* to save sinners; their rebellions had been committed *against him*, and they were deserving of his righteous indignation and holy abhorrence; he not only ventured some danger, and incurred some trouble and expense, in rescuing them from their *deserved* destruction; but he impoverished and abased himself, and endured the most excruciating tortures and the most ignominious death, for that end; and he not only brings them a temporary relief, but perfects their everlasting salvation. In short, the blessed Jesus hath perfectly fulfilled the law of "loving our neighbour as ourselves," in such circumstances as no other person could be placed in. His conduct therefore is the best interpretation of the commandment, and the best example for our imitation. Several other accommodations have been made of the subject; the oil and wine have been considered as representing the blood and Spirit of Christ, by which our souls are healed; the inn his Church; the host his ministers; and the two pence his sacraments: but these fancies are far more amusing than instructive; and it may seriously be apprehended, that by such interpretations

k Tohn xi. 1-5.
xii. 1-3.

l eii. 2, 3 Acts
xv. 15. 2 John
10.

m 1-46 viii. 55.
Domi xxi. 1
Prov xiii. 4
A. c. xxi. 3

n xii. 24 John
vi. 27

o Matt. xiv. 15
xv. 22. Mark
xv. 21
P ix. 55. Ion. iv.
1-4.

38 ¶ Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into ^k a certain ^l ^m ⁿ ^o ^p ^q ^r ^s ^t ^u ^v ^w ^x ^y ^z ^{aa} ^{ab} ^{ac} ^{ad} ^{ae} ^{af} ^{ag} ^{ah} ^{ai} ^{aj} ^{ak} ^{al} ^{am} ^{an} ^{ao} ^{ap} ^{aq} ^{ar} ^{as} ^{at} ^{au} ^{av} ^{aw} ^{ax} ^{ay} ^{az} ^{ba} ^{bb} ^{bc} ^{bd} ^{be} ^{bf} ^{bg} ^{bh} ^{bi} ^{bj} ^{bk} ^{bl} ^{bm} ^{bn} ^{bo} ^{bp} ^{bq} ^{br} ^{bs} ^{bt} ^{bu} ^{bv} ^{bw} ^{bx} ^{by} ^{bz} ^{ca} ^{cb} ^{cc} ^{cd} ^{ce} ^{cf} ^{cg} ^{ch} ^{ci} ^{cj} ^{ck} ^{cl} ^{cm} ^{cn} ^{co} ^{cp} ^{cq} ^{cr} ^{cs} ^{ct} ^{cu} ^{cv} ^{cw} ^{cx} ^{cy} ^{cz} ^{da} ^{db} ^{dc} ^{dd} ^{de} ^{df} ^{dg} ^{dh} ^{di} ^{dj} ^{dk} ^{dl} ^{dm} ^{dn} ^{do} ^{dp} ^{dq} ^{dr} ^{ds} ^{dt} ^{du} ^{dv} ^{dw} ^{dx} ^{dy} ^{dz} ^{ea} ^{eb} ^{ec} ^{ed} ^{ee} ^{ef} ^{eg} ^{eh} ^{ei} ^{ej} ^{ek} ^{el} ^{em} ^{en} ^{eo} ^{ep} ^{eq} ^{er} ^{es} ^{et} ^{eu} ^{ev} ^{ew} ^{ex} ^{ey} ^{ez} ^{fa} ^{fb} ^{fc} ^{fd} ^{fe} ^{ff} ^{fg} ^{fh} ^{fi} ^{fj} ^{fk} ^{fl} ^{fm} ^{fn} ^{fo} ^{fp} ^{fq} ^{fr} ^{fs} ^{ft} ^{fu} ^{fv} ^{fw} ^{fx} ^{fy} ^{fz} ^{ga} ^{gb} ^{gc} ^{gd} ^{ge} ^{gf} ^{gg} ^{gh} ^{gi} ^{gj} ^{gk} ^{gl} ^{gm} ^{gn} ^{go} ^{gp} ^{gq} ^{gr} ^{gs} ^{gt} ^{gu} ^{gv} ^{gw} ^{gx} ^{gy} ^{gz} ^{ha} ^{hb} ^{hc} ^{hd} ^{he} ^{hf} ^{hg} ^{hh} ^{hi} ^{hj} ^{hk} ^{hl} ^{hm} ^{hn} ^{ho} ^{hp} ^{hq} ^{hr} ^{hs} ^{ht} ^{hu} ^{hv} ^{hw} ^{hx} ^{hy} ^{hz} ^{ia} ^{ib} ^{ic} ^{id} ^{ie} ^{if} ^{ig} ^{ih} ⁱⁱ ^{ij} ^{ik} ^{il} ^{im} ⁱⁿ ^{io} ^{ip} ^{iq} ^{ir} ^{is} ^{it} ^{iu} ^{iv} ^{iw} ^{ix} ^{iy} ^{iz} ^{ja} ^{jb} ^{jc} ^{jd} ^{je} ^{jf} ^{jj} ^{jk} ^{jl} ^{jm} ^{jn} ^{jo} ^{jp} ^{jq} ^{jr} ^{js} ^{jt} ^{ju} ^{jv} ^{jw} ^{jx} ^{ky} ^{kz} ^{la} ^{lb} ^{lc} ^{ld} ^{le} ^{lf} ^{lg} ^{lh} ^{li} ^{lj} ^{lk} ^{ll} ^{lm} ^{ln} ^{lo} ^{lp} ^{lq} ^{lr} ^{ls} ^{lt} ^{lu} ^{lv} ^{lw} ^{lx} ^{ly} ^{lz} ^{ma} ^{mb} ^{mc} ^{md} ^{me} ^{mf} ^{mg} ^{mh} ^{mi} ^{mj} ^{mk} ^{ml} ^{mm} ^{mn} ^{mo} ^{mp} ^{mq} ^{mr} ^{ms} ^{mt} ^{mu} ^{mv} ^{mw} ^{mx} ^{my} ^{mz} ^{na} ^{nb} ^{nc} nd ^{ne} ^{nf} ^{ng} ^{nh} ⁿⁱ ^{nj} ^{nk} ^{nl} ^{nm} ⁿⁿ ^{no} ^{np} ^{nq} ^{nr} ^{ns} ^{nt} ^{nu} ^{nv} ^{nw} ^{nx} ^{ny} ^{nz} ^{oa} ^{ob} ^{oc} ^{od} ^{oe} ^{of} ^{og} ^{oh} ^{oi} ^{oj} ^{ok} ^{ol} ^{om} ^{on} ^{oo} ^{op} ^{oq} ^{or} ^{os} ^{ot} ^{ou} ^{ov} ^{ow} ^{ox} ^{oy} ^{oz} ^{pa} ^{pb} ^{pc} ^{pd} ^{pe} ^{pf} ^{pg} ^{ph} ^{pi} ^{pj} ^{pk} ^{pl} ^{pm} ^{pn} ^{po} ^{pp} ^{pq} ^{pr} ^{ps} ^{pt} ^{pu} ^{pv} ^{pw} ^{px} ^{py} ^{pz} ^{qa} ^{qb} ^{qc} ^{qd} ^{qe} ^{qf} ^{qg} ^{qh} ^{qi} ^{qj} ^{qk} ^{ql} ^{qm} ^{qn} ^{qo} ^{qp} ^{qq} ^{qr} ^{qs} ^{qt} ^{qu} ^{qv} ^{qw} ^{qx} ^{qy} ^{qz} ^{ra} ^{rb} ^{rc} rd ^{re} ^{rf} ^{rg} ^{rh} ^{ri} ^{rj} ^{rk} ^{rl} ^{rm} ^{rn} ^{ro} ^{rp} ^{rq} ^{rr} ^{rs} ^{rt} ^{ru} ^{rv} ^{rw} ^{rx} ^{ry} ^{rz} ^{sa} ^{sb} ^{sc} ^{sd} ^{se} ^{sf} ^{sg} ^{sh} ^{si} ^{sj} ^{sk} ^{sl} sm ^{sn} ^{so} ^{sp} ^{sq} ^{sr} ^{ss} st ^{su} ^{sv} ^{sw} ^{sx} ^{sy} ^{sz} ^{ta} ^{tb} ^{tc} ^{td} ^{te} ^{tf} ^{tg} th ^{ti} ^{tj} ^{tk} ^{tl} tm ^{tn} ^{to} ^{tp} ^{tq} ^{tr} ^{ts} ^{tt} ^{tu} ^{tv} ^{tw} ^{tx} ^{ty} ^{tz} ^{ua} ^{ub} ^{uc} ^{ud} ^{ue} ^{uf} ^{ug} ^{uh} ^{ui} ^{uj} ^{uk} ^{ul} ^{um} ^{un} ^{uo} ^{up} ^{uq} ^{ur} ^{us} ^{ut} ^{uu} ^{uv} ^{uw} ^{ux} ^{uy} ^{uz} ^{va} ^{vb} ^{vc} ^{vd} ^{ve} ^{vf} ^{vg} ^{vh} ^{vi} ^{vj} ^{vk} ^{vl} ^{vm} ^{vn} ^{vo} ^{vp} ^{vq} ^{vr} ^{vs} ^{vt} ^{vu} ^{vv} ^{vw} ^{vx} ^{vy} ^{vz} ^{wa} ^{wb} ^{wc} ^{wd} ^{we} ^{wf} ^{wg} ^{wh} ^{wi} ^{wj} ^{wk} ^{wl} ^{wm} ^{wn} ^{wo} ^{wp} ^{wq} ^{wr} ^{ws} ^{wt} ^{wu} ^{wv} ^{ww} ^{wx} ^{wy} ^{wz} ^{xa} ^{xb} ^{xc} ^{xd} ^{xe} ^{xf} ^{fg} ^{xg} ^{xh} ^{xi} ^{xj} ^{xk} ^{xl} ^{xm} ^{xn} ^{xo} ^{xp} ^{xq} ^{xr} ^{xs} ^{xt} ^{xu} ^{xv} ^{xw} ^{xx} ^{xy} ^{xz} ^{ya} ^{yb} ^{yc} ^{yd} ^{ye} ^{yf} ^{yg} ^{yh} ^{yi} ^{yj} ^{yk} ^{yl} ^{ym} ^{yn} ^{yo} ^{yp} ^{yq} ^{yr} ^{ys} ^{yt} ^{yu} ^{yv} ^{yw} ^{yx} ^{yy} ^{yz} ^{za} ^{zb} ^{zc} ^{zd} ^{ze} ^{zf} ^{zg} ^{zh} ^{zi} ^{zj} ^{zk} ^{zl} ^{zm} ^{zn} ^{zo} ^{zp} ^{zq} ^{zr} ^{zs} ^{zt} ^{zu} ^{zv} ^{zw} ^{zx} ^{zy} ^{zz}

39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

40 But Martha was ⁿ cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, ^o dost thou not care that ^p my

sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, ^q thou art careful and troubled about ^r many things;

42 But ^s one thing is needful: ^t and Mary hath ^u chosen that ^v good part, ^w which shall not be taken away from her.

men's thoughts have been very much drawn off from the grand practical inference, "Go thou, and do likewise."—*By chance*; that is, *without intention*. The priest was pursuing his own object; and his coming to the spot, at this special time, was undesigned in that respect. But that which is *accidental*, or *by chance*, as man is concerned, forms a part of the plan and purpose of God. (Note, *Ruth* ii. 3.)

V. 38—42. On some occasion, when our Lord and his disciples stopped in Bethany, in their way to Jerusalem, and were hospitably entertained in the house of Martha the sister of Lazarus, the following incident occurred. (*Marg. Ref.*) As soon as Jesus was sat down, he entered as usual upon some edifying discourse: and Mary, delighted with the opportunity, sat at his feet as a humble disciple to hear his word, and thus to welcome him as her Saviour and instructor. But Martha, desirous of showing her respect and affection to him in another manner, was aiming to provide a suitable entertainment; so that she was hurried and encumbered "about much serving." Thus she was likely to lose the opportunity of obtaining good to her soul by our Lord's visit; and she also put herself into an agitation of mind, which was both uncomfortable and sinful. Not being able, however, *alone*, to accomplish her designs, in which she probably too much consulted the credit of her hospitality, she was displeased with her sister for not coming to her assistance. She therefore came in haste, and with some warmth appealed to Jesus himself; nay, in some sense expostulated with him, about the supposed impropriety of Mary's conduct: inquiring whether it gave him no concern to see her sister so inattentive, as to leave her to serve alone? and desiring him to command her to go to her assistance. But the holy and heavenly mind of Christ viewed the case in a far different light: and, addressing Martha, with a tender and compassionate repetition of her name, he observed, that she was solicitous and disquieted (as the waters are agitated by a violent storm) about many things which were not worth her regard; "but that one thing was needful," which she was at that time led to neglect. The term *needful* has reference to some proposed end: many things are *needful* to the gratification of men's passions; but the end proposed is in itself neither *needful* nor *useful*: many things are *needful* to the continuance of our lives on earth, but that may not be *needful* or profitable for us. So that the favour of God is the only thing that is absolutely *needful* to our final happiness; the salvation of Christ is absolutely *needful* for us sinners, in order to the enjoyment of God's favour; and a humble, believing, obedient attention to the Gospel is

absolutely *needful*, in order to our obtaining an interest in the salvation of Christ. Where this one thing *needful* is properly attended to, all other matters will be used or pursued in subserviency to it; and whatever may seem to be neglected or lost by this choice and conduct, present comfort and eternal felicity will be secured. Our Lord therefore added, that "Mary had chosen that good part," which should not be taken from her: it was her wis and happy choice to "sit at his feet, and hear his words;" she was not to be seduced into a neglect of his instructions, by any secular cares and encumbrances; and as neither life, death, nor eternity, would deprive her of her interest in his salvation; so Christ would by no means consent to her being deprived of the present satisfaction of listening to his discourse, in order to assist in providing a *needless* plenty and variety for the refreshment of the bodies, or the indulgence of the appetites, of the company. Though Martha was on this occasion faulty, yet she was a true believer, and did not in her general conduct neglect the one thing needful: we may therefore suppose that this seasonable and affecting reproof had its proper effect; and that her conduct, when Jesus afterwards came to her house, was regulated by more spiritual and rational considerations.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—16.

The ministry of the Gospel is intended to prepare men to receive Christ as a Prince and a Saviour; and he will surely come, in the power of his Spirit, to all places whither he sends his faithful servants. The increase of *labourers* in this blessed work should excite us to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth more and more: for they are but few, compared with the harvest of souls that shall in due time be gathered in; or even in proportion to the extent of the visible Church, and the number of mere *loiterers*. At Christ's command we should go forth to preach his Gospel, "as lambs among wolves;" depending on his power, we need not fear their rage; and copying his example, we should maintain a meek and blameless conduct, in the midst of injuries and provocations. Whilst we disinterestedly seek the peace and salvation of those to whom we are sent, we may conscientiously "eat and drink such things as are set before us;" for the faithful minister is as justly entitled to a moderate subsistence, as the labourer is to his wages; yet we should endeavour to requite those who contribute to our support, as well as to promote the success of the Gospel, by our prayers and good

CHAP. XI.

Jesus teaches his disciples to pray, and encourages earnestness by two illustra-

offices in their behalf. But if our message be obstinately rejected, we ought, in the most decided manner, to bear testimony against, and separate from, the opposers of it: and dreadful will be the case of those, to whom "the kingdom of God hath come nigh," but who have put it from them with contempt and dislike. In this way numbers, who have possessed, and been proud of, valuable privileges and distinctions, will be thrust down into hell, with more terrible vengeance than the inhabitants of Tyre, or even of Sodom; for these did not continue impotent under such abundant means of grace. Nor let any imagine that this will only be verified on those, who were favoured with, and rejected, the ministry of Christ and his apostles: for it is still true of all the faithful preachers of the Gospel, that "he who heareth them, heareth Christ;" and he who despiseth them, despiseth Christ; and the Father also who sent him."

V. 17—24.

When pious ministers are evidently made useful, they disregard their toil and hardship, and return from preaching the word, to meet their gracious Lord in retirement, with joy and gratitude. We may be sure that he will always rather exceed his promise, than fall short of it, to all who go forth, depending on his help and observing his directions. As he was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, and as, in consequence of his death upon the cross, he foresaw that adversary "falling as lightning from heaven;" so we may labour and pray in hope for the pulling down of his kingdom of ignorance, infidelity, impiety, and vice, all over the earth, through the preaching of the Gospel and by the power of our exalted Redeemer. Relying on him, we may expect to trample under foot the most potent and malignant enemies, who are like serpents and scorpions, and to have Satan himself bruised under our feet shortly; nor can any adversary by any means hurt those, whom Jesus employs, protects, and prospers. But though we should be thankful for gifts and usefulness, yet we should chiefly seek the assurance that our names are written in heaven, that we may have a solid ground of rejoicing: for it would be far better to be the most obscure believer, than to have all knowledge, eloquence, and even success in spreading the Gospel, and at length to prove a cast-away. Let us then beware especially of spiritual pride: by this sin, Satan fell like lightning from heaven, and from a bright arch-angel became a hateful and miserable fiend: pride hath been the fore-runner of destruction to many, who "have prophesied, wrought miracles, and cast out devils, in Christ's name;" and of many, who for a time have preached with great popularity and apparent success: and it hath tarnished the lustre, and terminated the usefulness, of others, concerning whose final state we have better hopes. The Lord Jesus rejoiced in spirit, that it pleased the Father to hide his mysteries from the wise and prudent, and to reveal them unto babes;

tions. 1—13. *He casts out a devil, and exposes the absurdity and malice of those who ascribed the miracle to the power of Beelzebub, 14—26. He shows the*

and he hath ever "resisted the proud, and given his grace "unto the humble." The more simply dependent we therefore are on the teaching, help, and blessing of the Son of God, the more we shall know both of the Father and of the Son, the more blessed we shall be in seeing the glory, and hearing the words, of the divine Saviour; and the more we shall be made useful in promoting his cause.

V. 25—29.

Good questions may be proposed from very base motives; yet we ought seriously to inquire "What we shall do to "inherit eternal life?" And nothing should be counted difficult or perilous, where such a prize is at stake; especially as it is connected with the awful alternative of everlasting punishment. In answer to this inquiry, the blessed Saviour will direct us to the written word, and demand of us, how we there read? Yet the holy law itself cannot answer the question, *How a sinner may inherit eternal life?* It is, however, proper for those, "who desire to be under "the law, to hear the law:" and when its extensive, spiritual, and reasonable requirements are scripturally stated, we may safely assure any inquirer, that if he do this he shall live. Indeed the most perfect obedience for the time to come would not discharge any part of the debt, which we have already contracted: yet we know that no man will ever perform this condition, or be able to claim eternal life, even on this ground; nay, no one will ever love God and his neighbour with any measure of pure spiritual love, who is not made partaker of regenerating grace; the tendency of which is, to increase humiliation for sin, and simplicity of dependence on the free mercy of God in Christ Jesus. But the proud heart of man strives hard against these mortifying convictions; and every ray of light that breaks in upon the conscience excites the renewed endeavour, "to justify himself," even as the approach of danger stirs us up to provide for our own defence. As the nature and effects of the love of God are most out of the way of carnal men, they elude conviction on that score, provided they can prove that they have not been injurious to their neighbours. Leaving out therefore the first and great commandment, as if it were actually repealed or fulfilled, they endeavour "to justify themselves," in respect of the second, which is like unto it: and learned Scribes, ancient and modern, come in to their aid with a variety of corrupt glosses, perplexing criticisms, and frivolous distinctions, before which the meaning and spirit of the precept seem to evaporate. Thus the most flagrant injustice, treachery, oppression, and inhumanity, are openly vindicated as consistent with the law of God! Nay, the Scripture is ransacked, and quoted, for precedents and arguments in favour of the most horrid cruelties, that rapacious avarice, malignity, bigotry, or ambition, can perpetrate! Some difference of climate, colour, or religious tenets, is pleaded; as if this bounded the divine command, and excused us for not loving a vast majority of the human

blessedness of true piety above all external privileges; and warns the impenitent Jews, 27—36. Dining with a Pharisee, he exposes the ignorance, hy-

poority, and wickedness of the Scribes and Pharisees, 37—52. They eagerly endeavour to ensnare and accuse him, 53, 54.

species as our neighbours! Or some *judicial* regulation, made to prevent the fatal effects of that hardness of heart which no law can change, or some practices evidently originating from human selfishness, are adduced, as if they actually repealed the laws of "loving our neighbour as ourselves," and "of doing to all others, as we would they should do unto us." Thus men render the commandments of God of none effect, by their traditions and corrupt reasonings; and human learning, nay, what is called theology, often rivets those prejudices, which are equally subversive of the law of love, and of the Gospel of free grace. We must, however, endeavour by every means to counteract the effects of such destructive errors: and in order to this, apt illustrations, and appeals to the heart and conscience, may be more useful than abstracted reasonings; and though we must not countenance any corrupt prejudices, yet on many occasions it is advisable to oppose them *indirectly*, and to study by what avenue we may best come at the heart.

V. 30—37.

It is most lamentable to observe to what a degree selfishness pervades all ranks and orders of men; and how many excuses they will devise, that they may avoid incurring trouble or expense in relieving the miseries of others. They will plead that they are in haste, that their business is urgent or *sacred*, that the attempt is vain or perilous, that they have it not in their power, that others will do it to greater advantage, or that it properly belongs not to them. With such pretences many pass by the wretched and perishing, and avoid looking on them, that they may be excused from assisting them: others will give them a look and pitying word, hoping some good Christian will come to their relief, though they cannot get time, or are not able to do it. Alas, that many professors and ministers of religion are as evidently selfish and unfeeling as any other men! and thus they give up their holy faith and sacred function to the contempt and invectives of infidels; who substitute a proud semblance of benevolence in the place of repentance, faith in a divine Saviour, love to God, and to man, for his sake. The true Christian, however, has the law of love written in his heart: the Spirit of Christ dwells in him, and his image is renewed on his soul: misery will therefore uniformly excite compassion in his breast, wherever it is seen, though in a stranger, an enemy, or one of an opposite sect or party. Thus the Son of God looked down with compassion on our deserved and helpless misery, and came to our relief; though he knew that it would expose him to the deepest abasement and most intense sufferings to deliver us: thus he is ever ready to pity and help the poor sinner, when stripped of every plea, wounded in his conscience, and without hope of deliverance from any other quarter. In our utmost distress he hath come to us, to bind up our broken hearts, to pour his healing balm into our bleeding wounds, and to preserve

us from that destruction, into which our enemies had plunged us: by his power and grace he brings us into his Church, and there takes care of and heals our souls; and he requires his ministers and people to show their love to him, by their attention to the weak and discouraged of his flock; assuaging them of an abundant recompense at his return to judge the world. After this interesting and endearing example of inexpressible love, to which we owe all our hopes and comforts, every believer must and will pity and endeavour to relieve the oppressed, and to comfort the wretched; he will be induced to venture loss, danger, and reproach, in the work and labour of love: the excuses, which satisfy others, and which once satisfied him, will no longer be admitted; he will become the good Samaritan to the poor and afflicted of every name and nation who come in his way; yea, he will go out of his way to meet with and relieve them, as he hath ability and opportunity. And when he considers that Jesus loved him and bled for him, when an enemy and a rebel, and, having shown him mercy, that he has commanded him "to go and do likewise," he will love, and do good to, even his enemies, and to the vilest of mankind, for Christ's sake. With this view of Christianity before our eyes, have we reason to expect that any, who profess it, will defraud, oppress, enslave, or persecute any of the human race? If there be any appearance of such practices in some who seem to be Christians, we must either allow that they are not what they profess to be, or that they "know not what manner of spirit they are of."

V. 38—42.

Let us follow Christ, especially in his persevering love to sinners; let us welcome him into our hearts, and his disciples and ministers into our houses; and let the latter especially be careful to improve the hours of social intercourse in edifying discourse. But we should have more profit in meeting together, as well as larger ability in imitating the good Samaritan, if we were not so "cumbered about much serving." Alas, what time is wasted, and what expenses are incurred, even in the entertainment of the ministers and professors of the Gospel, to feast the guests, and to gratify the vanity of those who furnish the repast! Whilst a scanty surplus remains for the poor, and a small proportion of the opportunity for religious improvement. Nay, sometimes the persons concerned thus lose their temper also; and are even induced to violate the sabbath, and to constrain their servants to neglect the public ordinances of God, and perhaps to do the same themselves! If the gracious Saviour were personally present on such occasions, and saw his professed disciples thus "careful and troubled about many things," would he not rebuke them more sharply than he did Martha? Indeed, such delinquents will attempt to vindicate their conduct, and perhaps may be angry, and affect to censure those, who are indifferent to external accommodations, compared with "sitting at Christ's feet, and hearing his word."

AND it came to pass, ^a that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, ^b teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

2 And he said unto them, ^c When ye pray, say, ^d Our Father ^e which art in heaven, ^f Hallowed be thy name. ^g Thy kingdom come. ^h Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

3 ⁱ Give us ^j day by day our daily bread.

4 And ^k forgive us our sins; ^l for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And ^m lead us not into temptation; ⁿ but deliver us from evil.

5 And he said unto them, ^o Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

6 For a friend of mine ^p in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him:

7 And he from within shall answer and say, ^q Trouble me not: ^r the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend; yet, ^s because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

9 And ^t I say unto you, ^u Ask, and it shall be given you; ^v seek, and ye shall find; ^w knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

10 For ^x every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

11 If ^y a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or, if he shall ask an egg, will he ^z offer him ^{aa} a scorpion?

13 If ye then, ^b being evil, ^c know how to give good gifts unto your children; ^d how much more shall ^{ee} your heavenly Father ^{ff} give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

but he will decide the matter against them, and not admit of their plea that these are *little things*; much less will he consider such cares and encumbrances as *needful*. But it is not in this way alone, that we are apt to be careful and troubled about many things. Numbers are wholly given up to a variety of worldly pursuits and anxieties, to the entire neglect of their souls: and there are none of us, who do not at some times expose ourselves to the rebuke of Christ, for our disproportionate solicitude and eagerness about mere trifles, when compared with our attention to the concerns of eternity. Let us then mind, more diligently and entirely, the one thing needful: 'none but Jesus can do wretched sinners good': to hear, believe, and obey his Gospel, and to have him for our "Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption," comprises all that is necessary for this world and the next: and without this, all the rest will leave us for ever miserable. This good part is by the Gospel proposed to our choice: happy then are they, who give it a decided preference to all earthly objects; for it shall not be taken from them, through the countless ages of eternity: and to them, who choose and seek it in the first place, all things else that can conduce to their present comfort or their everlasting felicity, shall assuredly be added.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI. V. 1-4. Our Lord seems to have constantly prayed with his disciples, when they were retired together. On one of these occasions, a certain

person, (perhaps one of the seventy disciples, who might not have heard the sermon on the mount.) entreated him to teach them to pray, as John had taught his followers. Probably John had added to his general instructions on this subject some short directory or form of prayer, which both served to distinguish his disciples from those of the Pharisees, and to impress upon their minds the important truths that he had inculcated concerning the Messiah, and the spiritual blessings of his kingdom; and thus to regulate their judgments and devotions at the same time. This disciple therefore desired Christ to instruct them to pray by some similar method: for we cannot suppose but that he had taught them both what to pray for, and in what manner to pray, by his doctrine and daily example. In answer to his request, our Lord again delivered that prayer, which we have already fully considered; (*Note, Matt. vi. 7-14.*) The variations are immaterial, except the omission of the concluding doxology. Instead of *this day*, we here read, *day by day*, or daily; and *sins* is substituted for *debts*. But the clause, *When ye pray, say*, at least warrants the frequent use of the very words here prescribed, which certainly imply every thing that we can ask for ourselves or others, in respect of this life, and of that which is to come.

V. 5-13. (*Notes, &c. Matt. vii. 7-12.*) In addition to this comprehensive form of prayer, our Lord encouraged the disciples to be persevering and earnest in their requests, so as to take no denial; the happy effects of which he first illustrated by a case that might occur to

shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend; yet, because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

10 For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or, if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

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g Matt ix 32, 33.
h 22, Mark
i vi 32-37.

14 ¶ And he was ^c casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.

15 But some of them said, ^b He casteth out devils through ^{*} Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

16 And others, ^b tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.

17 But he, ^b knowing their thoughts, said unto them, ^b Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.

18 If ^a Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ^a ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, ^a by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore ^b shall they be your judges.

20 But if I with ^a the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt ^a the kingdom of God is come upon you.

21 When ^a a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

22 But ^a when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he

taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

23 He ^a that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

24 When ^a the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, ^b he walketh through ^a dry places, seeking rest: and ^a finding none, he saith, ^b I will return unto my house whence I came out.

25 And when he cometh, ^a he findeth it swept and garnished.

26 Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits ^a more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: ^a and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

27 ¶ And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, ^b Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.

28 But he said, ^a Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

29 ¶ And ^b when the people were gathered together, he began to say,

u ix. 50. Mat xii. 30. Rev. iii. 15, 16.

x Matt xii 43-45.

y Jer. i. 7. ii. 2.

z Jude vi 37-40. 1st Cor. i. 1.

1st Cor. xxi. 1-2.

7 xii 17-19.

xii. 3.

1st Cor. i. 1.

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n 15 Mat xii 31-34. Jam. iii 5-8.

o ix. 49. Matt. xii. 27, 28.

p 21 Rev. ix. 22.

q Job xv. 6. Matt. xii. 47, 48. Rom. iii. 19.

r Ex. viii. 19.

s Matt. xii. 28.

t Ex. 9 11. Dan. ix. 44. Acts. xix. 25.

u 28 2 Then. i. 5.

v Matt. xii. 29.

w Mark iii. 27.

x Gen. iii. 15. Is. lix. 24, 25. 1st Cor. i. 1.

y Col. i. 15.

z 1 John iii. 8. iv. 4. Rev. xx. 1-3.

them. In those hot countries, it is common, where it can be done safely, to travel in the cool of the evening and the first hours of the night. Should an unexpected guest, therefore, come to the house of one wholly unprepared for entertaining him, he would apply to a friend or neighbour to assist him, in affording the weary traveller some refreshment. And though his friend might attempt to put him off, and excuse himself; yet, if he was not easily denied, but urged the request, with an importunity which in other circumstances would be reprehensible, he would seldom fail, in the event, to overcome the reluctance of his friend. If then importunity proved so successful with men, notwithstanding their selfishness, and the inconvenience which attends granting a request made at a late hour; how much more will it prevail with God; who delighteth in mercy, who deems no time unseasonable, who answers every prayer with most perfect ease, and who only delays his favours, in order to make men more earnest and persevering in their supplications! This illustration our Lord concluded, by repeating such exhortations and promises as have already been considered; except that, instead of *good things*, he here inserts "the Holy Spirit;" by which it is intimated, that this gift to sinners, since the work of redemption was completed, is the sum or earnest of all good things: for by his influences we are brought to know God and ourselves, to repent, to believe in and love Christ, to hope, rejoice, and obey; and so are made comfortable and useful in this world, and meet for happiness in the next.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is two-fold: his immediate inspiration made men prophets, his regenerating and sanctifying influence renders men *saints* or holy persons. No sober man can suppose that every one who prays for the Holy Spirit will be made a prophet, or enabled to work miracles. His renewing, enlightening, sanctifying, and comforting influences are no doubt exclusively intended. (Notes, John iv. 10-15. vii. 37-39. xvi. 7-15.)

V. 14-26. (Notes, &c. Matt. xii. 22-30. 43-45.) "The finger of God," denoting the power by which Christ wrought his miracles, may refer to the confession of the Egyptian magicians, with respect to the miracles performed by Moses. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 27, 28. The power and beneficence of Christ's miracles, the authority and excellence of his doctrine, the holiness of his character, and the wisdom of his answers to his malicious enemies, seem to have combined to overpower this woman with admiration; so that she could not refrain from crying aloud, that the woman, who had the honour of being his mother, must be peculiarly happy above all others. The answer of our Lord to this was exactly to the same effect with one on another occasion, that hath already been considered. (Notes, Matt. xii. 46-50.) "The blessedness of my mother ariseth not from this, that she brought me forth: but in order to that, it is necessary for her, as well as well as others, to believe and obey my word." (Whitby.)

This is an evil generation: ¹ they seek a sign, and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

30 For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

31 The "queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth, to hear the wisdom of Solomon: and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

32 The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

33 No man, * when he hath lighted a candle, putteth *it* in a secret place, neither under * a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in * may see the light.

34 The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is ^u single, thy whole body also is full of light; ^x but when *thine eye* is evil, thy body also *is* full of darkness.

35 Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

36 If thy whole body therefore *be* full of light, having no part dark, * the whole shall be full of light; as when † the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

37 ¶ And as he spake, a certain Phari-
see besought him to dine with him : and
he went in, and sat down to meat.

38 And when the Pharisee saw it, ^b he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.

39 And the Lord said unto him, ^c Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter: ^d but your inward part is full of ^e ravening and wickedness.

10 Ye 'fools!' did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within also?

41 But ¹ rather give alms ² of such things as ye have, and, behold, ³ all things are clean unto you.

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15, 16. vi. 22, 23.) 'A mind thus enlig-
' free from all those distempers which darken
' blind the soul, will direct all our facu-
' linations, and all the actions of the life,
' light doth the body, when it walks in a
' *hithu*.)

V. 37.—39. As Jesus was speaking on the
or on some other, (for harmonists seem with pre-
place the following incident in another connec-
rise with apparent respect and earnestness pre-
dine with him, and he was pleased to accept of
tion; yet it is probable that the Pharisee had
collected together many of his brethren to-
with a design to ensnare him, of which he was
aware. This may account for the remarkable
his reproofs and warnings. The Pharisee, ex-
pressed his surprise, that Jesus had not first ac-
cording to their traditions; and thus gave him
tunity of exposing and condemning their false
superstition. (Note, Matt. xxiii. 25, 26.) The
dred washed, is, in the original, *been baptiz-*
Mark vii. 3—5.)

V. 29—36. (*Note, Matt. xii. 38—42.*) This was an answer to another cavil, connected with the preceding objection. (16.) The substance of it hath been already commented upon; but the allusion to the light and the eye seems here to be applied in a different manner than elsewhere. Our Lord intimated by it, that he should proceed to diffuse the light of his truth, notwithstanding the perverse opposition of the Pharisees, nor would they be able to cover or extinguish that light, which he had kindled for the benefit of mankind. Yet they would remain in darkness, through the prejudices of their wicked hearts: even as men whose eyes are vitiated see nothing, or nothing as it really is, in the clearest light. It therefore concerned every hearer to be peculiarly careful, that the supposed light which they followed was not darkness, or their first principles and practical judgment erroneous. For as the body is furnished with light for its direction by the eye, so the mind is guided in every operation by the practical judgment: if then their minds were well prepared to receive the benefit of revelation, they would have no more occasion to demand further information, than a man with good eyes is at a loss to distinguish the surrounding objects, “when the bright shining of a candle doth give him light.” This last verse may be thus understood, “If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark; the whole,” (*of thy conduct, or path.*) “shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.” (*Notes, Matt. v.*)

53 And as he said these things unto them, the Scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things;

CP. XVII. 12, 13
L. IX. 12
T. X. 27
S. III. 1. XX. 10

54 Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

PE. XXXVII. 22,
35. IV. 5, 6,
Matt. XXIII. 15.
16-35. Mark XII.
13

was to open and explain the Scripture, and to admit men into the knowledge of God, and his truth and will: but instead of using this key aright, they had taken it away by their corrupt glosses and perverse opposition to the doctrine of Christ; so that they neither entered in themselves, nor allowed the people to enter, even when they were in a measure desirous of doing it. 'For a long season, they, who ought to have been the door-keepers of the Church, have been the chief persons in driving away the people from the knowledge of God.' (*Beza.*)

V. 53, 54. No wonder these sharp reproofs extremely enraged the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees; especially as Jesus was a guest at one of their tables, when he spake to them: they therefore set on him all at once, to put him off his guard, with a variety of questions, or objections, that he might say something, which should give them matter of accusation against him. Several of the original words are taken from *hunting*; which is an apt emblem of the vehemence, and rudeness, and artful devices, with which the company sought to entangle Jesus in their nets and toils.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-13.

It is a great mercy to be made so sensible of our indigence, and dependence on God, as to desire to pray; and so aware of our own ignorance, and of the difficulty of praying aright, as to seek for instruction in this respect. When we are thus led to beseech the Lord Jesus to teach us to pray, we use a very proper introduction to all our subsequent devotions: but he will do it in a far superior manner to John, or any other of his servants. He will lead us into an acquaintance with our own wants and the promises of God, and excite in our hearts correspondent desires and affections; and thus he will teach us to pray in humility, reverence, faith, expectation, and earnestness: he will give us "the Spirit of adoption," that we may come with confidence to God, as "Our Father, who is in heaven;" and from love to him and zeal for his glory, as well as from good-will to men, to pray "that his name may be hallowed, his kingdom advanced, and his will done on earth as in heaven." From submission to his will, moderation in our desires, and reliance on his providence, we shall thus learn to live upon him, "day by day, for our daily bread." We shall under this instruction seek continually for the "pardon of our sins, and learn to forgive every one who is indebted to us;" and from abhorrence of iniquity, as well as from dread of its consequences, we shall, in humble consciousness of our own weakness, pray "not to be led into temptation, but to be delivered from evil;" from the evil one, from the evil of this world, and from the evil of our own hearts; that we may be made holy as our God is holy, and be prepared for perfect felicity in his favour and presence for ever. The teaching of Christ will also encourage and

enlarge our hopes. Assured that we are praying for such things as are good for us, we shall persevere, and be importunate, though we seem to meet with a repulse; being satisfied, that "every one that asketh receiveth." We shall therefore return again and again to the throne of grace, even when we have been baffled by temptation or proved by delays; and renew and increase our earnestness in asking, seeking, and knocking, especially that we may obtain the Holy Spirit, to enlighten, sanctify, strengthen, and comfort our hearts, and to put us in full possession of the salvation of Christ. All these blessings our heavenly Father is far more ready to bestow on every one who asketh for them, than any indulgent father can be to give food to his hungry child; and, in this way, we need no more fear being fatally deluded, or finally overcome by our enemy, than a beloved child need fear lest his father should "give him a scorpion instead of an egg;" nay, this would be far more likely; because men are evil, but God is Love, and delighteth in mercy.

V. 14-36.

The goodness of God, in all its varied displays, tends to draw forth man's ingratitude and enmity. Even when divine Love was incarnate, for the salvation of sinners, his continued and persevering kindness and pre-eminent excellency excited the utmost envy and malignity in them, whose hypocrisy he exposed, whose selfishness he shamed, and with whose credit, interest, or authority, his doctrine interfered: nay, they ascribed his beneficent miracles to diabolical agency! But the tendency of his Gospel to humble piety, purity, equity, truth and love, did then, and does still, confute such blasphemous slanders; and it is even now in a measure accompanied with "the finger of God," to change the willing slaves of Satan into the devoted worshippers and servants of JEHOVAH. As the conversion of a sinner breaks that false peace which existed in his heart and conscience, whilst the devil reigned there with undisturbed sway, and two conflicting parties are formed within the soul, of which grace is superior, and will obtain the complete victory; so is the strange indifference of men to the concerns of religion disturbed, wherever the Gospel is successfully preached; and two parties are formed, the one for Christ and his Gospel, and the other in opposition to it; but the former will certainly prevail at length. In this contest none are allowed to stand neuter: the Lord Jesus calls on every one to join him in destroying the kingdom of Satan; "he that is not for him is against him, and he that gathereth not with him scattereth." Yet we must not hastily conclude, that all who appear to be for him will "continue to the end." Alas! the unclean spirit for a time goes out of many, who never admit the Saviour to take possession of their hearts; and so the enemy returns to his habitation, and "the last state of those men becomes worse than the first." From such a dreadful event, (may every one say,) 'Good Lord deliver us!' In order to this, we should

CHAP. XII.

Jesus warns his disciples against hypocrisy; and his fear of men in confessing him, 1—9; and shows the danger of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, 10—12. He refuses to act as judge in temporal things; and warns his disciples against covetousness, by the parable of a rich man, suddenly torn by death from all his purposed enjoyments, 13—21. He cautions them against anxious cares, and exhorts them

to seek spiritual blessings, 22—31; and to be always ready for the coming of their Lord, 35—40. He instructs and warns his ministers by the parable of a faithful, and a wicked, steward, 41—43. He predicts the divisions which his Gospel would occasion, 49—53; reproves those who knew not the signs of the times, 54—56; and counsels the people to seek reconciliation to God without delay, 57—59.

endeavour to "hear the word of God, and keep it," by faith and love in our hearts, and by obedience in our lives. Without this we cannot be blessed: for all notions, forms, and outward privileges, which fail of rectifying men's dispositions and regulating their conduct, will tend to their deeper condemnation. Thus multitudes, who hear the Gospel, are proved to be an evil generation: they stand out in unbelief against every demonstration of the truth, and continue in sin against the convictions of their own consciences; whilst many come from distant places through love to the word of God, and bestow great pains under immense disadvantages to become wise unto salvation; and others profit by far inferior means and instruments, who will rise up in judgment against them and condemn them.—But were Christ himself the constant Preacher to any company, and did he daily work his miracles among them, unless his grace also humbled their hearts and subdued their carnal prejudices, they would not profit. Instead therefore of wanting more evidence and fuller instruction, than the Lord is pleased to afford us, we should "pray, without ceasing," that our understandings may be opened, and our hearts prepared to profit by the light that we enjoy: and above all things we ought to take heed, that the "light which is in us be not darkness;" for if our leading principles be *fallacies*, and our affections *carnal*, our judgment and practice must become more egregiously wrong by all our reasonings and assiduity.

V. 37—54.

The case of these Pharisees and lawyers is an awful but instructive example. Their ambitious desire of pre-eminence, applause, and authority, and their proud and carnal prejudices, led them to place religion in minute, but specious, observances: this seduced them from the spiritual truth, will, and worship of God, and entangled them more and more in superstition and delusion. They gravely marvelled that Jesus washed not before dinner; yet they attempted not to cleanse their own hearts from ravening and wickedness; foolishly forgetting that "he who made that which is without, made that which is within also!" They fancied that external and uncommanded purifications would sanctify their meals; whilst the demands of justice and charity, as well as the duties of piety, were neglected! That they might appear singularly conscientious, and pay court to the priests, who doubtless flattered them in return, they scrupulously tilled even their garden-herbs; but at the same time "they passed over judgment and the love

"of God!" Thus they were exposed to the sharp rebukes of Christ, and engaged in opposition to him; and, with all their sanctimonious gravity and austerity, they became his persecutors and murderers, and fell under his most tremendous indignation, till vengeance came upon them to the uttermost. Alas! they have had many successors, who have proved themselves to be *their* children, even as they were proved to be "the children of those who slew the prophets;" whose conduct has evinced, that the honour which they affected to render to the memory of deceased saints and martyrs seemed rather intended for their murderers than for them. Proud men deem the word of God to be a *reproach* to them: many would allow the preacher to be severe upon the crimes of others, provided he would be gentle to their's; and among learned men, haughty ecclesiastics, and false professors of the Gospel, numbers seem to think that their characters even sanctify their crimes; so that it is often thought intolerable insolence for a minister to expose their most flagrant enormities! But the reproach comes from their own consciences; and we must by no means connive at their vices, which are more dishonourable to God and ruinous to men, in proportion to the eminence or sacredness of their characters: and when renowned or authorized teachers perplex the truth by their subtleties, and set the people against it by their influence, they become murderers of men's souls, and ought most carefully to be avoided. Wo unto them! "for they take away the key of knowledge;" "they enter not in themselves, and those who are entering in they hinder;" and they are the more dangerous for being "as graves that appear not, of which the men who walk over them are not aware." But such truths must excite opposition, and many will vehemently urge those, who openly declare them, to speak or do something that may give them a handle against them. Such persons, therefore, as engage in contests of this kind should be of a blameless conversation, and endued with heavenly wisdom; they should also have a clear call, and a great command of their own temper and spirit; so that few are qualified for those services. But we should all look well to our own hearts, that they may be cleansed and new created: and whilst we insist on the great things of the law and of the Gospel, we must be careful not to neglect even the smallest matter which God hath appointed.—Finally, the more careful we are "to give alms of such things as we have," and to deduct from every article of expense for that purpose, the more comfortable, pure, and holy will all our possessions and enjoyments be.

e viii. 1, xvi. 13.
xxi. 34 Jos. vi. 11.
1 Jo. xxi. 15.
24. 25. Ps. x. 3.
1 Jo. 10. cxi.
24. 27. Prov.
24. 11. 12.

xxviii. 10 Jer. vi.
15. xxi. 17. 19.
Me. 2. 14. 15.
9 Mark vi. 22.
1 Jo. v. 16. 11.
1 Jo. v. 16. 11.
1 Jo. v. 16. 11.
1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.
2 Tim. vi. 9, 10.
1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.
2 Pet. ii. 3, 14.
Ps. xxxviii. 16.
Prov. xv. 15.
1 Jo. 16. 12. 13.
6-8. v. 10-12.
Matt. vi. 25. 26.
1 Tim. vi. 9-10.
2 Pet. ii. 12.

14. xlii. 47-49.
Joh. xli. 6. Ps. lxxviii. 13.
Hos. ii. 9. Matt. v. 15. Acts xiv. 17. — h 22. 29. x. 25.
xxv. 7. Acts ii. 37. xvi. 20. — i 13. 11. xi. 14. xiv. 14. xvi. 9. xviii. 22. xix.
17. 20. xi. 12. Is. lviii. 7. Matt. v. 42. Rom. xii. 15. 2 Cor. ix. 6. 8c. 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18.
1 John iii. 16, 17. — k 21. xvi. 4. 6. Ps. xvii. 14. Jam. iii. 15.

15 And he said unto them, ° Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, ° The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully.

17 And he thought within himself, saying, ° What ° shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, ° This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build

greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, ° Soul, thou hast much goods laid up ° for many years; ° take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

20 But ° God said unto him, ° Thou fool, this night ° thy soul shall be required of thee: ° then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?

21 So is ° he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not ° rich towards God.

had attempted it, the people would have inquired of him as the Israelite had formerly done of Moses, "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" (*Marg. Ref.*) "Christ would not, for three causes, be a judge to divide inheritances. First, for that he would not cherish the carnal opinion which the Jews had of the Messiah. Secondly, for that he would distinguish the civil governance from the ecclesiastical. Thirdly, to teach us to beware of them, which abuse the show of the Gospel, and also the name of ministers, to their own private advantage: (*Beza.*) 'It is probable, that Christ refused to take this office upon him, chiefly, because he had but little time remaining, which he could better spend in dividing to them the word of life, and promoting their eternal interest.' (*Whitby.*) This reason is very forcible, in all similar cases, with those ministers, who consider the shortness and uncertainty of life, the state of the world, the worth of souls, and the vast importance and arduousness of their work. (*Acts* vi. 2-4.)

V. 15-21. Our Lord, according to his usual manner, took occasion, from this improper intrusion, with great energy to warn his hearers against every kind or degree of covetousness, and every approach to it; as neither the duration, comfort, credit, usefulness, or happy event of a man's life consists in the abundance of his possessions. To illustrate and enforce this caution, he spake a parable, replete with instruction. The rich man, described in it, is not said to have obtained his wealth by fraud or oppression; or to have been a penurious miser. He had an estate; and by skilful and diligent culture it yielded him large crops, so that his affluence increased rapidly: at length, however, he scarcely could determine what he should do, or where he should store up his treasures, seeing he had no longer room for them. He therefore determined to build larger barns and granaries; and having thus secured his abundance, to have done with the encumbrance of business, and to give himself up to ease, and indulgence in the liberal use of his riches. The character here drawn is exactly that of a prudent, worldly man, who rises from inferior circumstances to great affluence, by assiduous industry and good management; and then retires from business, to spend the latter part of his life according to his own inclinations. But there was no grateful regard to the

bountiful providence of God, "who gave him power to "get wealth;" no consideration of his accountableness for the use of it; and no respect to the authority, commandment, favour, or glory of God. There was no proper sense of the instability of human affairs, the uncertainty of life, the vanity of earthly pleasure, the worth of his soul, or the importance of eternity; nor thought of happiness to be found in communion with God, in peace of conscience, and the hope of glory: but the man spake within himself, as if "eating, drinking, and being merry," had constituted the chief good of a rational creature; and as if it might be enjoyed here for ever. Neither did he express any regard to *his neighbour*: his wealth was *his own*, and he would hoard it for himself, and spend it on *himself*; for if he had inquired how many poor persons were destitute of food and raiment, and in various ways needed relief, he might have found a better way to dispose of his superfluity, and have enjoyed a far superior satisfaction than what he proposed to himself. "What shall I do?" "Give it to the poor, that shouldst thou do." (*Basil.*) (*Marg. Ref.*) The whole was the language of a selfish, ungodly man, and was intended to expose such characters, even when not chargeable with gross immorality. However therefore the man might glory that the might of his hand had gotten him this wealth, and deem himself wise and happy, or however he might be envied, respected, or commended by his neighbours, he was in the judgment of God, "a fool," and as such God addressed him. He had *foolishly* reckoned on many years to come, when he had not a single day to live! he had provided a vast superfluity for a future continuance on earth, which was never to be granted him, but he had made no manner of provision for the world to come, into which he was immediately to pass, and in which he was to exist to eternity! For that very night his soul was required of him, and he must give an account of his ungodliness, selfishness, and covetousness; "and then whose would those things be, which he had "provided," to the neglect of his soul, and to his everlasting ruin? He could not tell into whose hands his wealth would pass: nor would it be any comfort to him, even for his friends and children to possess it, when he was torn from all that he loved and idolized, and plunged into the pit of destruction; and perhaps they too were preparing

22 ¶ And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

23 The ^a life is more than meat, and the body *is* more than raiment.

24 Consider ^a the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have store-house nor barn; and God feedeth them: ^y How much more are ye better than the fowls?

25 And ^z which of you, with taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit?

26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, ^a why take ye thought for the rest?

27 Consider ^b the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, ^c That Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-

morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

29 And ^a seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither ^a be ye of doubtful mind.

30 For ^a all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and ^b your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

31 But ^a rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

32 Fear not, ^a little flock; for it is your Father's ¹ good pleasure to give you ^a the kingdom.

33 ^a Sell that ye have, and give alms: ^a provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

34 For ^a where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

122 Matt. vi. 25.
123 1 Cor. vii.
124 Phil. v. 6.
125 xxiii. 5.

126 Gen. xix. 17.
127 12. 11.
128 Prov. xxi. 8.
129 Acts. xxi. 18.
130 1 Kings
xvii. 4—6. Job
xxviii. 41 Ps
cxiv. 15, 16.
131 cxlvi. 2 Matt.
vi. 26.
132 y. 7—10. Job
xxx. 11 Matt.
x. 31.

133 z. xix. 3 Matt. v.
36 vi. 27.

134 a. 29. Ps. xxviii.
6. Ec. vii. 13.
1 Pet. v. 7.

135 b. 24. Matt. vi. 28
—30 Jam. i. 10.
11.

136 c. 1 Kings x.
2 Cor. ix.

137 d. Is. xl. 6, 7
1 Pet. i. 24.

138 25 Matt. xvi.
26 xix. 11. xxi.
3. xxi. 17, 20.
122 x. 7. 8. xxii.
35 Matt. vi.
31.

139 Or, *Do not be
careless and
careless.*
140 12. 11. 12.
32 Eph. i. 5.
1 Thes. iv. 5.
1 Pet. i. 5.
132 Matt. vi. 18.
133 x. 29. xvi.
14 John x. 17.
134 14. 15. 16.
135 11—13. Ps.
xxviii. 9, 10, 12.
136 xxviii. 9, 10, 12.
137 xxviii. 15, 16.
138 Matt. vi. 23.
139 16. 17.
140 Rom. viii. 31.
141 32. 1 Tim. iv.
5. Hebr. xii. 6.
142 1 Cor. i. 10. 11.
143 xl. 11. xii. 14.
144 Marg. liti. 16.
145 Matt. xvi. 18.
146 xvi. 12—14. xx.
16 John. 26—
30.

147 x. 21. Matt. x.
26, 27. Eph. i.
5. 6. Phil. i. 13.
148 2 Thes. i. 11.
149 Jer. li. 23.
150 Rom. vi. 23. viii.
26, 27. 2 Thes.
i. 5. Heb. xii.
28. Jam. ii. 5.
151 1 Pet. i. 3—5.
152 1 Pet. i. 22. Matt.
xx. 21. A. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

153 x. 21. A. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

by it for the same dreadful end. To this parable our Lord added, "so is every one, who layeth up treasure for 'himself, and is not rich towards God.'" All those persons "lay up treasure for themselves," who seek riches, either for their own sakes, or for the influence and consequence that they bestow; or to spend in the pride of life and luxurious indulgence; or in order to aggrandize heir families; but who are not rich in faith, in wisdom and grace, in good works, and a heavenly treasure. Every man of this character is in God's account *a fool*; his life is vanity and vexation, his success an empty bubble, or a destructive delusion, and his end most miserable.

V. 22—34. Therefore. 'On this account;' or, 'for this reason.' It is probable, that our Lord frequently repeated the following instructions; and he here assigns the reason why he so often inculcated them; namely, because of the folly and fatal consequences of covetousness, and the excessive proneness of the human heart to it, in one form or other. The disciples were poor, and might think themselves unconcerned in the parable, (Notes, Matt. vi. 19—34;) not considering that the earnest desire and unsuccessful pursuit of riches are equally criminal with the covetous acquisition and possession of them. Some variation from the passage referred to may be noted. It is here added, (26.) "If ye be not able to do that which is 'least, &c.'" Whence we may infer that the preceding question was proverbial, and was used, to show the inefficiency of being careful about those things which are not at all in our own power. If a man were ever so solicitous about it, he "could not add a cubit to his stature;" why then should men be anxious about other matters, of far greater importance to their comfort and happiness, but which are unconnected with their present duty? For these also would be ordered by the same unerring hand of

God, as he saw best, without their being able in the least to alter his appointments. The expression, (29.) "neither be ye of doubtful mind," seems to be taken from the irregular motion of the clouds, as driven by the winds: thus men's minds are hurried about with various cares and anxieties, by the changing events of life, so long as they want to contrive and manage for themselves, and have not learned to trust God in the path of duty. Our Lord here adds, (32.) "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's 'good pleasure to give you the kingdom.'" His disciples are a small flock of harmless, defenceless sheep, in the midst of the multitudes of this wicked world; but they are dear to him, who hath purchased them and brought them back to his fold: and, as "their Father intends to give 'them the kingdom,'" of heavenly glory and felicity, and greatly delights in doing this, so he will certainly provide for them, during their passage through this world to it. They ought therefore to dismiss their fears, and to cast all their cares upon him. 'It is a foolish thing, not to look for small things at his hands, who freely giveth us the 'greatest things.' (Besa.) Instead of burdening themselves in endeavours to accumulate wealth, Christ's disciples ought, when properly called to it, to part with their possessions, and distribute to their needy brethren. When this is done in faith and love, it ensures to them a treasure, of which God himself is the Guardian. In this manner they are secured from putting their "money into a bag with 'holes,'" or into one liable to wear out, (which is an apt emblem of the uncertainty of all earthly possessions;) for their treasure is laid up in heaven, out of the reach of change or danger; and their hearts also become more and more heavenly. Probably, this instruction influenced the primitive converts, after the day of Pentecost, to sell their estates for the support of their poor brethren. (Marg. Ref.)

49 ¶ I am * come to send fire on the earth,^y and what will I if it be already kindled?

50 But^z I have a baptism to be baptized with; * and how am I * straitened till it be accomplished!

51 Suppose^b ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division:

52 For from henceforth^o there shall be five in one house divided, three^c against two, and two against three.

53 The father shall be divided against the son,^d and the son against the father: the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother: the mother

in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

54 ¶ And he said also to the people, * When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower: and so it is.

55 And^e when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass.

56 Ye hypocrites, * ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth: but how is it^h that ye do not discern this time?

57 Yea, andⁱ why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?

would be severely punished, as servants were when scourged with many stripes: but he who had not received such explicit instructions, or had not attained to such distinct knowledge of his master's will, and was remiss and negligent in his work, would indeed be adjudged deserving of punishment, but not dealt with in so rigorous a manner. This may be considered as a general rule of the Lord's dealing with all his rational creatures. No man is left in such absolute ignorance, except by his own fault, as not to do many things which he knows to be wrong, and to neglect many things that he knows to be right: therefore all are inexcusable, and liable to condemnation and punishment, if they continue impenitent. But in proportion to the degree in which they have the means of instruction, and are actually acquainted with the will of God, their disobedience becomes more aggravated, and their punishment will be proportionably more severe. Thus, likewise, will the Lord dispense correction to his offending children, in proportion as they have sinned against light and conviction, or the contrary. For as men expect a proportional return from them, to whose stewardship they have committed much, so will God call every man to account for the use of every talent intrusted to him; and if he has been unfaithful in the midst of many advantages, he will inflict on him the heavier vengeance. (*Notes, Matt. xxv. 14—30. Marg. Ref.*)

V. 49—53. The introduction of the Gospel would resemble the kindling of a fire, which should occasion very destructive and wide-spreading desolations. Not that this is the tendency of Christianity, which is most pure, peaceable, and loving: but it would be the effect of the opposition raised against it by the pride and lusts of men, and of the abuses which many would make of it. Hence would arise furious persecutions, bitter contentions, and multiplied divisions, usurpations, and oppressions; and these things, with the resistance made to them, would diffuse manifold calamities and evils all over the earth.—Infidels have confidently adduced these effects of Christianity, as so many objections to its divine original; wilfully forgetting that “thus it was written, and thus it must be.” The prediction of these effects, which a superficial observer would never have expected from so benign a

religion, forms an additional demonstration that it is from God: and every man, who is experimentally acquainted with the human heart, will readily account for them without charging the least blame to the Gospel; nay, he will see, that they are occasioned by its excellency, and must follow from it, whilst men continue proud, carnal, selfish, and alienated from God. To this prediction, our Lord added, “and what will I, if it be already kindled?” This seems to refer to the malignant opposition of the Scribes and Pharisees, and the ferment that his ministry had excited: but though the fire was indeed already kindled, did he wish that he had not been so open in his instructions and sharp in his reproofs? Did they suppose that he was disappointed or disconcerted? Did they imagine that he meant to desist? This was by no means the case: on the contrary, he earnestly desired that this fire should be more completely kindled, by the full and extensive publication of his Gospel. But before that could take place, “He had “a baptism to be baptized with,” far different from that of water and of the Holy Spirit, by which he had been admitted to the exercise of his prophetic office; for he must endure the most extreme sufferings, shed his blood, and pour out his soul unto death, before he could enter upon his work within the veil, as the High Priest of his Church, and be put in possession of the mediatorial throne. (*Notes &c. Matt. xx. 22, 23.*) “But how was he “straitened, till this was accomplished?” It did not consist with the plan laid down for the performance of this work, to preach the Gospel more openly or extensively, till this baptism was completed: in the mean time he was exceedingly straitened and limited in the exercise of his ardent love and zeal; and even longed for that awful and important crisis, which should make way for his exaltation, and the publication of his Gospel to all nations, that God might be glorified in the salvation of an innumerable multitude of precious souls; in the same manner as a pregnant woman desires the approach or increase of her pangs, in expectation of deliverance, and of being made a joyful mother. (*Notes, Matt. x. 34—39. xx. 20—23.*)

V. 54—57. (*Notes, Matt. xvi. 1—4.*) When the people saw a cloud rise in the west, from the Mediterranean sea, they had learned by constant observation to expect

h. Prov. xxv. 9.
Matt. v. 23-26
1. xiv. 31, 32 Gen
xxxii. 3-28
3. Sam. xiv. 19, 20
Job xlii. 21; xlii.
7. Ps xxxii. 6
Prov. vi. 1-5. 16
1. v. 6. 2 Cor. vi.
2. Heb. iii. 7-13
m. xlii. 24-28. Job xxxvi. 17, 18. Ps. l. 22.

58 When ^k thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, *as thou art in the way*, ^l give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, ^m and the judge deliver

thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee ⁿ into prison.

59 I tell thee, ^o thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last ^p mite.

n. Matt. xxiii. 30.
1. Pet. iii. 13.
1. v. xx. 7.
o. xvi. 26. Matt.
xviii. 34. xxv.
41. 46. 2. Thes.
1. 9.
p. Mark xii. 42.
Marg.

showers; and a south-wind from off the sultry deserts was deemed a sure prognostic of heat. In such matters they were sagacious; but the exact accomplishment of types and prophecies, in the doctrine, miracles, and character of Christ, and in the time and circumstances of his appearance, did not convince them that he was their promised Messiah! In this, their hypocritical scribes and teachers were most faulty; and, being blinded by their carnal prejudices, they used their influence to mislead the people. Yet, as the case was so very evident, why did not the people see with their own eyes, and judge for themselves what was right, or decide impartially and justly between him and his malicious opponents?

V. 58, 59. This passage, as it is here connected, implied a warning to the Jewish nation to cease from their opposition to Christ, and to welcome him as their Prince and Saviour, before it were too late; otherwise terrible and durable miseries would soon come upon them: but it also inculcated those instructions to individuals that have been already considered. (*Note, Matt. v. 25, 26. Marg. Ref.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-12.

Increasing popularity, and the earnest and diligent attendance of multitudes, must not induce ministers to be less plain and distinguishing in their address. This can only tend to multiply hypocrites; for even amidst innumerable multitudes of hearers, there is generally but a little flock of true disciples. All, who attend in any degree to religion, need repeated and earnest warnings, "first of all to beware of hypocrisy;" as they who are most infected with this heaven will be most ready to take offence. Indeed the plainest addresses seldom have a salutary effect on those who are confirmed in hypocrisy; but they tend to prevent others from venturing upon the same destructive course: for they who are under concern about their souls, but not established in the faith, are in various ways tempted to it. Yet while it assumes many specious appearances, and promises great advantages, it is a most foolish, as well as hateful sin: it can only hide, for a moment, what must at length be known to all; and it confers a temporary reputation, but leads to everlasting shame and contempt. Let us then continually think of that day, when our most secret actions, words, thoughts, and motives, will be proclaimed before men and angels; that we may be more careful to approve our inmost purposes, and our most retired conduct, to a heart-searching God, than to obtain the good opinion of our fellow servants.--But if we are the friends of Christ, we must also be open in our religion, and on our guard against the fear of men: were we sure that our enemies would prevail as much as possible, we know that they could only kill the body; and after the transient pain occasioned by their cruel hatred,

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we should be for ever beyond their reach; whereas, should their terror induce us to incur the righteous displeasure of God, we know, that "after he hath killed, he hath power to cast into hell." If true believers, we are perfectly safe from every effect of man's enmity which can prove really injurious: and whilst we realize the superintending providence of God over the meanest animal, we may be sure, that "even the very hairs of our head are all numbered." Let us then boldly confess Christ before men, in joyful hope of being acknowledged by him before the angels of God; whilst they, who have denied him for fear of reproach or persecution, will be rejected, and left under the condemnation to everlasting misery. But let no trembling, penitent backslider, who in an unguarded hour hath spoken "a word against the Son of man," doubt of obtaining forgiveness: for this is far different from that determined enmity, which dictates the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which shall never be forgiven, because it will never be repented of. And let no one, who is suffering for Christ's sake, or called upon to speak in his name amid his enemies, fear but that he will by his "Holy Spirit teach him, in the same hour, what he ought to say;" for they who trust in him shall never be confounded."

V. 13-21.

Alas! most men are too much immersed in thoughts and contrivances about the world, to value spiritual blessings; and many hearers of the Gospel are even *at the time* so distracted about their inheritances, that they would be ready to interrupt the preachers, if they could by their counsel or influence promote their own secular interest! But as Christ would not attend to such *inferior concerns*, so his ministers should avoid similar distractions, and leave it to others to be judges and dividers over the people.—Every opportunity, however, should be embraced, of warning men to "take heed and beware of covetousness;" by which almost all are, one way or other, in some degree seduced. Every reflecting man's experience and observation may convince him of the inefficacy of riches to promote even the comfort of this life; yet, after all that the Lord hath said upon this subject, how few are there among professed Christians, who do not desire to be rich, and to make their children rich! And many are apt to point out to them similar characters with this in the parable, as models for their imitation, and as proper persons with whom to form connexions! Yet it is, as it were, said to one of them after another, "This night thy soul is required of thee," perhaps when they are saying within themselves, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." And what doth it then avail, to have the public informed how many tens or hundreds of thousands they have left behind them, or how rich their heirs are

2 X

CHAP. XIII.

Jesus shows, that calamities are no proof of peculiar guilt; and exhorts his hearers to repent, in order to escape impending ruin, 1—5. The parable of a barren fig-tree, which was to be cut down, 6—9. Jesus heals a woman, who had been long bowed together, and silences the hypocritical ruler of the synagogue, 10—

made by their deccase? Indeed it often happens, that when men have spent their lives, without regard to God, to their neighbours, or their own souls, in order to enrich their families, they are even disappointed in this vain ambition, their riches are strangely dissipated, and their children reduced to dependence or poverty: for “man walketh in a vain show, he disquieteth himself in vain, “he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather “them.” As therefore “every one, who layeth up treasure for himself,” is thus foolish, guilty, and miserable, let us seek the true riches, that we may be approved by God himself as wise men, and made honourable and happy in the eternal enjoyment of his favour.

V. 22—34.

If we are the disciples of Christ, and have learned to serve him in our secular employments and in the use of our possessions, we should peculiarly watch against distracting cares and apprehensions. He that created our bodies and sustains our lives, and who also feeds the ravens and adorns the lilies, will give us needful food and raiment: and if we have got a relish for spiritual pleasures, and know the value of “the beauty of holiness,” we shall not crave the luxuries and elegancies of life. Yet we often need rebuking for “being of little faith,” and therefore “of a doubtful mind.” But it becomes Christians to seek nobler blessings, than the nations of the earth who know not God: they should remember that “their “Father knoweth that they have need of food and raiment,” and is both able and willing to bestow them: and if we seek first the privileges and the righteousness of his kingdom, and desire its peace and prosperity, all other things will surely be added unto us. Indeed the flock which the good Shepherd hath purchased and collected into his fold, and which he hath taught to rely on his powerful and watchful care, to hear his voice, to love his ordinances, and to copy his example, is but small, when compared with the vast multitudes around them, who resemble filthy swine, ravening wolves, subtle foxes, or venomous serpents: but they need not fear wanting any good thing, “for it is their Father’s good pleasure to give them the “kingdom,” and he will withhold no good thing from them. Let us then first examine, whether we belong to this little flock, and have those dispositions which characterize it: let us also keep close under our Shepherd’s care: and let us be thankful, that it was not the Lord’s good pleasure to give us worldly treasures, and to leave us destitute of his grace. Whilst others therefore are grasping

17; he compares the kingdom of God to a grain of mustard-seed, 18, 19, and to leaven, 20. 21. Being asked, whether few should be saved, he warns the people to strive to enter in at the strait gate, before it was finally shut, 22—30. He will not be diverted from his course, by the threatenings of Herod, 31—33. He predicts and laments over the approaching desolations of Jerusalem, 34, 35.

after more and more of earthly perishing vanities, Christians should excite one another to abound in good works: that, willingly expending what they have in relieving the necessitous, and promoting the cause of godliness, they may “provide themselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in heaven that faileth not?” and this will gradually both enlarge their capacities of enjoyment, and ensure to them a rich and glorious recompense.

V. 35—43.

Whilst we cast all our care upon God in respect of events and consequences, we cannot be too attentive to our duty. We are the servants of Christ, whose coming to remove us by death, or to judge the world, may be very soon or very sudden: but if “our loins be girded and our “lights burning,” we shall have no more reason to dread the summons, than a child has to be alarmed at the arrival of a messenger, who is sent to convey him home to his tender parents: nay, words can never express the delight, with which our gracious Lord will welcome and bless his faithful servants. If then we are habitually watching and ready, what does it signify, whether he come at the second or the third watch? For blessed are those servants, who “are found so doing.” But as robbers assault the house when the family has least expectation of them, so death generally surprises a man when he is least thinking of it. We should therefore never remit our watch, to pursue vain diversions, worldly interests, or sensual indulgences, lest our Lord should come at that very time. This indeed applies to every man, but more especially to the ministers of the Gospel: they are the stewards of God’s mysteries and rulers of his household, to give every one his portion in due season, and rightly to divide the word of truth. Happy then is that faithful and wise servant, who delights in his work, and gives himself continually to it; for “his “Lord, when he cometh, will make him ruler over all “that he hath:” and how paltry are all other preferments, when compared with “this crown of glory, that fadeth “not away!” But wo to infidels, and ungodly men, who appear in the garb of ministers! They say in their hearts, “My Lord delayeth his coming,” and so they are emboldened to persecute, oppress, and fleece their brethren, and to indulge in riot and licentiousness; but they will soon be surprised in the midst of their successful impiety, and torn away from all their abused preferments and dignities “in a day when they think not of it,” and will have their portion with the unbelievers. They, however, who were thus ungodly, not only with the Bible in their

a Acts v. 37.

b Lam. ii. 20 Ez.
ix. 5-7 1 Pet.
iv. 17, 19.c 4 Job xvii. 5-
16 John ix. 2
Acts xxi. 4.d 5 xxiv. 47
Matt. i. 2, 10
—12 Acts ii. 38
—40 10, 19.e Acts 42-44, xxi.
22, 21 xxiv. 28
—30 Matt. x. 40
45 xxii. 2 xxiii.
35-38, xxiv. 21.f Neh. iii. 15,
John ix. 7, 11.
g 1 Kin. xxi. 30.
Job. i. 19.

THERE were present at that season some that told him of ^a the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had ^b mingled with their sacrifices.

2 And Jesus answering, said unto them, ^c Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?

3 I tell you, Nay: but, ^d except ye repent, ^e ye shall all likewise perish.

4 Or those eighteen upon whom the tower ^f in Siloam ^g fell, and slew

them, think ye that they were ^{*} sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

5 I tell you, Nay: but, ^h except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

6 ⁱ He spake also this parable: A certain man had a ^j fig-tree planted in his vineyard: and he came ^k and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these ^l three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and

* Or, *doctors* vii.
41, 42 xi. 4
51, 52 xl. 11.
xxiii. 24.

h 1s xxviii. 10
—13 Ez. xlviii.
30.

i Ps. lxxxviii. 8-13
Is. x. 2-4 Jer.
li. 33 vi. 10 xxi.
35, 50 Mic. vi. 8.

j 12 11.
k xx. 10 — 14.
Mic. xxi. 34—
40.

l Lev. xix. 23.
xxv. 21. Rom.
ii. 4, 5.

hands, but with the Gospel in their mouths; and who knew their Lord's will accurately, and could instruct others in it, yet never prepared themselves, or set about obeying it, will be punished in the most tremendous manner. Indeed the condemnation of heathens, and others of those who have had but few advantages for knowing the will of God, will be very light, compared with that of wicked professors of Christianity, and of ungodly ministers: "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall ^{"much be required."} May the Lord then give us grace, to improve our many advantages to the glory of his name!

V. 49—59.

We should not be much disconcerted at the effects occasioned by the preaching of the Gospel, or even by the abuse which wicked men make of it. The blessed Jesus persevered in his work, though he saw the fire already kindled, and foresaw how far it would communicate its flames: nay, he even longed for the hour of his extremest sufferings, that he might possess the "joy set before him," and send the Gospel through the nations of the earth. We should therefore be bold and zealous in promoting his truth, without shrinking for fear of consequences to ourselves or others: for though afflictions must be endured, divisions excited, and a man's foes be those of his own household, yet sinners will be converted, and God will be glorified. But if men were as wise for their souls as in their temporal concerns, they would know the signs of the times and the day of their visitation: and though false teachers might attempt to prejudice or mislead them, they would "even of themselves discern what was right," suitable to their wants, and conducive to their salvation. If any man therefore have found out, that God hath a controversy with him concerning his sins, let him without delay seek to him, as "God in Christ, reconciling the world ^{"to himself:"} for if death come, before his peace be made with God, his soul will be cast into the prison of hell; and as he will never be able to pay his mighty debt, so he must abide in that doleful place of torment to all eternity.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII. V. 1—3. These Galileans are supposed to have been concerned in the insurrection made by Judas of Galilee, who opposed paying tribute to Cesar, and submitting to the Roman authority. (*Marg. Ref.*)

When therefore they were come to Jerusalem to worship, and were presenting their oblations in the court of the temple, Pilate sent a company of soldiers, who cut them in pieces, and mingled their blood with that of the sacrifices. They who brought this report to Christ seem to have concluded, that these men were guilty of some dreadful crime; and that they were far greater sinners than their countrymen who escaped such destruction: but Christ repressed this rash and proud decision on their state and character, and assured them, that except they repented of their sins, they too would fall under the righteous indignation of God, and perish *in like manner*. This is generally supposed to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the slaughter of the Jews by the Romans, for making insurrections against the government; and especially to the havoc made among them in the courts of the temple, whilst they were offering their sacrifices; inasmuch, that the altar was sprinkled with their blood, and a multitude of dead bodies lay round about it. This shows, that they who brought sacrifices were admitted into the inner court. (*Notes, Lev. i. 5—9. 2 Chr. xxiii. 6.*) "Perhaps this story of the Galileans might now be mentioned unto Christ, with the design of leading him into a snare, whether he would justify, or condemn, the persons that ^{"were slain."} (*Doddridge.*)

V. 4, 5. Our Lord took occasion to mention another event, doubtless well known to his hearers, but of which we have no account in history, concerning eighteen persons who were slain by the falling of a tower. These were supposed to have been greater sinners than any other inhabitants of Jerusalem; because they seemed to be singled out by the hand of God himself for immediate punishment. But Christ assured them that this was not the case; and he renewed his declaration, that except they repented, they would all *likewise* perish. This is commonly supposed to refer to the destruction of the Jews in great multitudes, by the casting down of the walls and towers of Jerusalem, when the city was taken: but the sudden and dreadful slaughter of the Jews at that time seems in general intended, as the immediate hand of God was gone forth against them. It is observable, that our Lord determines nothing concerning the character and state of the persons in question: they were sinners, but not greater sinners than many others. No doubt he also intended to warn all men, in every age, that final and eternal ruin would certainly overtake all the impenitent, to whatever nation, or party, they belonged.

find none: ^a cut it down; ^a why cumbereth it the ground?

8 And he answering, said unto him, ^a Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it:

9 And if it bear fruit, *well*; and ^b if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

10 ¶ And ^a he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath:

11 And behold, there was a woman which had ^a a spirit of infirmity ^a eighteen years, and was ^b bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

12 And when Jesus saw her, he called *her to him*, and said unto her, ^a Woman, thou art ^a loosed from thine infirmity.

13 And ^a he laid his hands on her: ^a and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14 And when he had said these things, ^a all his adversaries were ashamed: ^a and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

V. 6—9. (Notes, Is. v. 1—7. Matt. xxi. 33—43. Marg. Ref.) This parable seems to have been added, to enforce the preceding warning. A fig-tree planted in a vineyard would have every advantage of culture: in three years time the young trees were expected to bear; but the owner of this tree is represented as coming three other years to seek fruit, and as not finding any. It might therefore be concluded to be a barren tree, not fit to occupy the room, or appropriate the nourishment and culture, which might be more profitably employed. The dresser of the vineyard, however, entreated that it might be spared for one more year; during which space he would use proper means for rendering it fruitful: then, perhaps it would produce fruit, but otherwise it ought to be cut down. The Jewish nation seems to have been primarily intended: the Lord had long borne with their unfruitfulness amidst manifold advantages, and the time of his vengeance approached. They would, however, be spared a little longer, that the apostles and preachers of the Gospel might make another vigorous and zealous effort to bring them to repentance, faith, and holiness; and, if this failed, they must be given to ruin. For Jerusalem would be destroyed, the ceremonial worship terminated, and the unbelieving Jews cast out of the Church, to make way for the calling of the Gentiles. But the parable is equally applicable to the case of all those individuals, who continue unfruitful under the means of grace: though they are spared from time to time, through the long-suffering of the Lord, they will at length be cut down by death, and cast into hell, except they repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Many expositors speak as if Christ himself was represented by the *dresser of the vineyard*; and indeed the long-suffering of God with sinners is the effect of his mediation; yet he seems rather to be the Owner of the vineyard, who sentenceth the barren trees to be cut down; and the language used seems to describe the fervent prayers

14 And ^a the ruler of the synagogue answered ^b with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath-day, and said unto the people, ^c There are six days in which men ought to work; in them therefore come and be healed, ^d and not on the sabbath-day.

15 The Lord then answered him, and said, ^e Thou hypocrite, ^f doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

16 And ought not this woman, ^g being a daughter of Abraham, ^h whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, ⁱ to be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day?

17 And when he had said these things, ^j all his adversaries were ashamed: ^k and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

and zealous labours of faithful ministers, who earnestly desire to prevent the ruin of the people.

V. 10—17. This woman must have attended the worship of God with great difficulty; as she was so bowed together, that she could in no degree lift up herself, but was forced to go almost double. The calamity, under which she had so long laboured, would in general have been considered as a very remarkable disease, arising from some known or unknown natural cause; but it was then *justly* ascribed to an evil spirit; so that in fact "Satan" "had bound her," for so long a time. Our Lord, seeing her in this afflicted state, called her to him, and by his word, attended with the laying on of his hands, immediately restored her; and, being made straight, she glorified God before all for this unexpected deliverance. But the ruler of the synagogue, who hated the doctrine and envied the honour of Christ, yet attempted to veil his enmity with the appearance of singular piety, told the people in anger, that they ought to come for healing on other days, and not on the holy rest of the sabbath: as if the woman had come to the synagogue on purpose for a cure; or as if a word and a touch, attended with so powerful and beneficent an effect, could break the sabbath! The malice and hypocrisy of the man were therefore evident, and our Lord severely rebuked him; showing, that none, even of the Scribes and Pharisees, scrupled to water their cattle on the sabbath-day, though it was attended with some labour, and was only necessary to preserve the animals from the uneasiness of a day's thirst, or the owner from some temporal loss that might result from it: and could it then be questioned, whether it were right to relieve a rational creature, a descendant of Abraham, (probably an heir of his faith,) from her long continued calamity on that holy day; even if it had been effected by labour? This reply was so satisfactory and conclusive, that it silenced and put to shame the ruler, and all the

q Neh vi 9-11.
Isa xl. 1. 2 Am
vii 12 13.

1. Ps. 15, 20, 18 7-
9. xxiii 1-11
Kz xiii 4. Mfr.
Ez. 1-23 Zeph
iii 3. Mark vii.
26-23
Is ix 7. Mark vj
14. John ix. 32
xi. 3. 10
t John xiv. 4. 5
xix 40. G. Heb
ii. 10 v. 9
u John iv. 34. ix
4. xi 51. xii 35
Acts 38
x ix 51. Mat. xx.
19. Acts xxi. 27.
v xiii 41 42. Mat.
v xiii 37-39.

31 ¶ The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, ^a Get thee out, and depart hence; for Herod will kill thee.

32 And he said unto them, Go ye and tell ^a that fox, Behold, ^a I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day ^a I shall be perfected.

33 Nevertheless, ^a I must walk to-day and to-morrow, and the day following: ^a for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

34 O Jerusalem, ^a Jerusalem, which

^a killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee: ^a how often would I have gathered ^b thy children together, ^c as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, ^a and ye would not!

35 Behold, ^a your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, ^a Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, ^a Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

1. Ps. xlii. xxxvii 7. Job i. xli 4. — d. xx. 23. Neh ix 30. Ps. lxxvi. 11. Prov. i. 24-30. Is. lxxviii 15. Jer vi 16. Jo 21. xxviii 14. xlviii 8. 27. Zech. i. 4. Matt. xxi 3. Acts vi 11. 15. — e. xxi. 5. 24. Lev. xxv 31. 32. 1. Jer. 45. 3. 1. 7. P. Isai. 10. 11. Dan ix. 26. 27. Mic. iii 12. Zech. xi 1. 2. xiv 2. Acts vi 11. 14. Hos. iii 4. 5. John viii. 31-36. xvi. 22-24. xii 35. 40. xix. 19-29. — f. x. 38-40. Ps. cxviii 25. Ps. 31. 9-11. Jo 7. Zech. xii 10. Matt. xxi 9. Mark ix 9. John xii. 13. Rom. x 9-15. 2 Cor. iii 15-18.

season their anguish and misery would be enhanced, by beholding the happiness of patriarchs and prophets, yea, of vast numbers of the Gentiles from every quarter of the globe, who would be saved by repentance and faith, whilst they perished through unbelief and impenitence; for “the first would be last, and the last first.” (Notes, &c. Prov. i. 20—33. Is. lv. 7, 8. Matt. vii. 21—23. viii. 11, 12.) In this address our Lord evidently declared to the people, that their admission into, or exclusion from, life and happiness entirely and absolutely depended on him.

V 31—33. Our Lord still continued within Herod's jurisdiction; and his miracles, doctrine, and reputation, seem to have given great uneasiness to that wicked prince, who probably menaced him; rather in hopes of driving him to a distance, than with any intention of proceeding against him. The Pharisees also of those parts wanted to remove him from them; and therefore they warned him to go thence; for otherwise Herod had determined to put him to death. But Christ directed them to inform “that fox,” (that subtle, insinuating, and mischievous man,) that he should proceed with his work without regarding him: he must continue to work merciful miracles for a very short time longer, as it were that day and the morrow; and then, as on the third day, he should be perfected by his sufferings, which would complete his work on earth, and make way for his performance of his work in heaven. Nevertheless, though his time was short, he *must needs* go openly from place to place whilst it lasted: and though he certainly should soon be put to death, yet that would not be by the hands of Herod in Galilee, for “it could not be that a prophet should perish,” or be murdered, “out of Jerusalem.” That city had, as it were, an exclusive claim to the guilt and infamy of murdering God's prophets; and it was not proper that the great Prophet of the Church should lay down his life in any other place. As John Baptist and others had been slain elsewhere, it is evident that this sentence must not be taken strictly: it was a general rule, and Christ would not be an exception to it. This message was in fact a defiance sent to Herod; but his wickedness in slaying John Baptist, contrary to the conviction of his own conscience, being added to all his other crimes, rendered it improper for our Lord to show him any regard. “I know that subtle tyrant, who hath shed the blood of my forerunner, is hunting after my death also; but tell him from me, that my times are

set in the eternal counsel of God, and when my prefixed time is accomplished, for my labours and sufferings, I shall, in spite of all the opposition of earth and hell, be perfected, and enjoy my full glory.” (Bp. Hall.) The word signifies, I am consecrated to my priestly office, by dying a sacrifice for the sins of the world.” (Whitby.) The offering of this sacrifice, however, was a most essential part of our Lord's priestly office; which having finished on earth, he ascended into heaven, to appear in the presence of God for us. The original verb is the same which is rendered “It is finished,” as spoken by him when expiring on the cross. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 34, 35. (Note, Matt. xxiii. 37—39.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—9.

As no place or employment can secure us from the stroke of death, we should always be preparing for it; and instead of considering the sudden or extraordinary removals of others as proofs that they were sinners above other men, we should endeavour to improve them as warnings to ourselves: for when dire calamities are reported, it may be said to sinners of every age and nation, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” Nay, whatever we read of the misery of the wicked in hell is intended to speak the same important warning. They who hear the Gospel and associate with the people of God, and yet continue impenitent and unconverted, are the barren fig-trees in the Lord's vineyard: from time to time he comes seeking fruit on them; but finding none, he at length condemns them to be cut down as cumberers of the ground; that they may no longer disgrace his Church in the eyes of those who are without, nor prevent the fruitfulness of those within. Indeed, when ministers behold such barren trees in their congregation, (alas, how numerous are they!) and when they fear that they are about to be cut down and cast into the fire, they are led, both by inclination and duty, to pray that they may be spared a little longer, and they desire to use every means for their salvation with redoubled assiduity: yet, if at last they continue unfruitful, they must acknowledge the justice of the sentence by which they are removed, to make way for more useful plants. It behooves every one of us to inquire, how long we have been favoured with the means of grace,

CHAP. XIV.

Jesus, on the Sabbath, heals a man who had the dropsy, and justifies himself in so doing, 1—6. By parables he teaches humility, 7—11, and hospitality to the poor, 12—14. The parable of the great

supper, 15—24. The necessity of self-denial, and renouncing the world, in order to be the disciples of Christ, inculcated, and illustrated by similes, 25—33. The worthlessness of salt which has lost its savour, 34, 35.

and been borne with by the long-suffering of God; and to examine whether we be now bearing fruit to his glory and the good of men, or be still mere cumberers of the ground? Such inquiries are peculiarly proper to be made at the beginning of a new year, or the return of any other periodical season. And when any are restored from sickness, and spared a little longer, in answer to the prayers of ministers or Christian friends, surely they should take their admonitions in good part, and seek to profit by their endeavours; remembering how short their respite may be, and how soon they may be cut down, if not at length rendered fruitful. But alas, many of these despise and revile such as pray and labour for their salvation, and “watch for their souls as those who must give account, that “they may do it with joy, and not with grief!”

V. 10—21.

Though we must not rest in means and ordinances, yet we should thankfully attend on them. If we would have a blessing from Christ, we must frequent the assemblies of his people, especially on his holy day; and if we come thither with pain and trouble, yet we shall not have cause to repent. We are not concerned, nor competent to determine, what influence Satan has in occasioning or increasing our bodily diseases: but we know that he hath bound our souls with the chain of our own sinful propensities, so that we are not able in any wise to lift up or liberate ourselves: and this hath been the case with numbers for many years, whilst their evil habits have continually been strengthening, and rendering their case more hopeless. But if Jesus speak the word, and put forth his healing power, even these will immediately be loosed, and their crooked judgments and dispositions rectified; and they will without delay be able and willing to glorify God by word and deed. This deliverance is most frequently wrought on the Lord's day: and whatever labour tends to put men in the way of receiving this blessing, or is instrumental in its being communicated to them, must peculiarly accord to the pious and beneficent intention of that sacred day of rest. But they, who hate the Gospel and its blessed effects, will find some objection to make against every instance of the power of divine grace; and when this is accompanied by a pretended exactness in externals, the hypocrisy of it may often be shown, by observing that they do things of the same kind for their own secular interest, which they blame others for doing to promote the salvation of souls. But evident good works, connected with a blameless conversation and defended by convincing arguments, must at length silence the most malicious adversaries, and bear testimony to men's consciences of the power and presence of God with us: and let enemies be ever so numerous or malicious, his kingdom will continue to increase in the world, till it fills the whole earth; and in every renewed soul, till it

has perfectly communicated its heavenly savour to all its faculties, dispositions, and affections.

V. 22—30.

When we reflect on the immense multitudes of the human species, it is very awful to consider, how few of them appear to be in the way of salvation, as marked out in the word of God. Yet let us rather look to ourselves, than waste our time in calculations or curious inquiries about others: it will not avail us how few, or how many, shall be saved, if we be not of that number, and if we be, we shall at length approve of the appointments of God in this and every other respect. Every unconverted sinner should then strive to enter in at the strait gate, by earnest prayer, by resisting temptations, by avoiding all occasions of committing sin, or silencing his conscience and hardening his heart, and by attending diligently on every means of grace: and every one of us should continue thus to labour and wrestle, that what may make our calling and election sure. But with what solemn attention, and application to our own souls, should we hear our Judge declare, that “many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able!” We are indeed assured that none shall seek the Lord, *when and where* he may be found, as in Christ, and on a throne of grace, by humble faith and fervent prayer, and at last fail of obtaining the blessing: but let all men beware of a proud, a slothful, a hypocritical, a partial seeking; and above all of procrastination. How dreadful will be the disappointment of those, who hoped, and intended, at some future time, to enter the strait gate, but who deferred the grand concern from worldly motives till it became too late, and the door was for ever shut against them! In vain will they call Christ Lord, Lord, and entreat him to open to them: in vain will they plead, that they heard his ministers, and frequented his table: he will utterly disregard their pleas, and refuse all pity to their anguish; whilst he shall bid them “depart from him “as workers of iniquity,” whom he never acknowledged to be in the number of his redeemed people: and even the felicity of those, with whom they formerly associated, as well as that of others whom they disdained, will add poignancy to their misery and despair. As there were such persons among our Lord's hearers, among those whom he fed by miracle, or with whom he sat down to meat; and as there was a Judas even among his own apostles; we ought surely to address our congregations in a similar manner; to put the case, that many of them may at last be found in this awful condition; and to enforce our warnings and exhortations by such alarming topics; but especially we ought to examine ourselves, and not to take things for granted, by an unwarranted confidence, where such infinite interests are at stake. None, however, ought to yield to despondency, either with respect to himself or others: for

a vii. 34—36. xl.
37. 1 Cor ix. 19
—22
b John iii. 1 Acts
v. 34.

c vii. 7. xi. 53.
34. xx. 20. 35.
xxxviii. 32. xli.
6. Isai. 4. lxiv.
6. 5. Prov. xxiii.
7. 16. xxix. 21.
Jer. xx. 10. Mark
iii. 2.
d xi. 44. 45.
e vi. 9. xlii. 14—
16. Matt. xii. 10.
Mark iii. 4. John
vii. 23.
f Matt. xxi. 25—
27. xlii. 46.

g xlii. 15. Ex.
xxiii. 4. 5. Dent.
xxii. 4. Matt.
xii. 11, 12.

h xlii. 17. xx. 26.
40. xxi. 15. Acts
vi. 10.
i Judg. xiv. 12.
Prov. viii. 1.
2. Eccl. xvi. 2.
Matt. xiii. 34.

AND it came to pass, ^a as he went in-
to the house of one of the ^b chief
Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath-
day, that ^c they watched him.

2 And, behold, there was a certain man
before him which had the dropsy.

3 And Jesus answering, spake unto
^d the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, ^e Is
it lawful to heal on the sabbath-day?

4 And ^f they held their peace. And
he took him, and healed him, and let him
go;

5 And answered them, saying, ^g Which
of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen
into a pit, and will not straightway pull
him out on the sabbath-day?

6 And ^h they could not answer him
again to these things.

7 ⁱ And he ^j put forth a parable to
those which were bidden, when he marked

how ^k they chose out the chief rooms;
saying unto them,

8 When thou art bidden of any ^l man to
a wedding, sit not down in the highest
room, lest a more honourable man than
thou be bidden of him;

9 And he that bade thee and him come
and say ^m to thee, Give this man place:
and thou begin with shame to take the
lowest room.

10 But when thou art bidden, ⁿ go
and sit down in the lowest room; so
when he that bade thee cometh, he may
say unto thee, Friend, go up higher:
^o then shalt thou have worship in the
presence of them that sit at meat with
thee.

11 For ^p whosoever exalteth himself
shall be abased; and he that humbleth
himself shall be exalted.

“behold, there are last who shall be first, and first who shall be last:” and though few of our immediate connexions should appear to be in the way of salvation, yet there will be others brought from every part of the earth, and the multitude will in all be immensely large.

V. 31—35.

It does not in general behoove us to speak disrespectfully of any who are invested with authority: yet apostates, persecutors, and crafty dissemblers, may on some occasions be spoken of in their true characters, that men may beware of them; and we must not flatter the wicked, or fear any man, when performing our bounden duty. We too should go about doing good, whilst our appointed span of life endures; and when that expires, we shall be perfected in holiness and felicity. But how black a mark of human depravity was the strange circumstance, of Jerusalem's being the slaughter-house of God's prophets, and the very place where his beloved Son was crucified! Alas, the visible Church hath generally been the grand scene of persecution; and they, whom the Saviour hath with persevering tenderness invited to take shelter under the shadow of his almighty wings, have not only contemptuously refused his kindness, but have hated and persecuted those who brought the invitation! Thus men bring upon themselves swift destruction from the presence of the Lord, as well as the forfeiture of all their privileges: but let us shun this fatal rock, and learn thankfully to welcome, and to profit by all those, who come in the name of the Lord to invite us to partake of his great salvation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV. V. 1—6. (Notes, &c. xi. 37—39. xiii. 11—17.) Some think that this chief Pharisee was one of the Sanhedrim, or the great council of the nation: but perhaps he was only a person of influence and autho-

rity among the Pharisees. He, however, (as well as several others who invited Jesus,) seems to have had an insidious design in entertaining him; and to have combined with several of his brethren in endeavouring to entangle him. But our Lord would not on that account be deterred from healing a man, afflicted with the dropsy, who probably came thither for that purpose. When they had declined answering his question respecting the lawfulness of doing this, he took the man aside, and having healed him, he sent him away; and then showed, that compassion for an animal, or regard to their own property, would have induced any of them to far more labour than what they blamed in him, where the life or comfort of a brother was concerned. This silenced their objections, though it did not subdue their enmity.

V. 7—11. The Scribes and Pharisees seem not to have attended even to that semblance of humility, under which numbers veil their ambition, that they may more successfully gratify it: but they openly contended for precedence, probably on the score of their reputation for wisdom, learning, or piety, or on account of their rank and authority; and they chose out for themselves the chief seats, thus claiming the highest respect as justly due to them. This disgraceful competition, however, though it rose from the same source, was a mere shadow of that spiritual pride and ambition, which has excluded numbers from the kingdom of Christ, produced the most lamentable effects in the visible Church, and done immense injury even to many true Christians and ministers. Our Lord therefore, in a mild yet decisive manner, reproveth the vain-glory of the guests, by a parable addressed as it were to each of them, the substance of which was taken from their scriptures. (Note, Prov. xxv. 6, 7.) If any of them should be invited to a marriage, (which was the principal festive occasion,) let him not aspire to the highest place, lest a more honourable person should be present, whom the master of the feast should deem entitled to the

k xi. 43. xx. 46.
Matt. xxiii. 6.
Marc. xii. 39.
Acts vii. 18, 19.
Phil. ii. 3. John
9.

l Eccl. vi. 6—12.
Prov. iii. 35. xi.
2. xvi. 18. Eccl.
*xxviii. 2—10.
Din. iv. 30—34.
n 1 Sam. xv. 17.
Prov. xv. 33
xxv. 6, 7.

o To ix. 14. Rev.
iii. 9.
p 1. 51. xviii. 14.
Job xxi. 29. xi.
10—12. Ps. xlii.
27. xxviii. 14.
Prov. xv. 33.
xviii. 12. xxix.
23. To ii. 11. 17.
Isai. 15. Matt.
xxiii. 12. Jam.
iv. 6. 1 Pet. v.
5.

12 ¶ Then said he also to him that bade him, ¶ When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again. ¶ and a recompense be made thee.

13 But when thou makest a feast, ¶ call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: ¶ for thou shalt be recompensed at ¶ the resurrection of the just.

15 ¶ And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, ¶ Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

16 Then said he unto him, ¶ A certain man made a great supper, and ¶ bade many:

17 And sent ¶ his servant at supper-time to say to them that were bidden,

¶ Come: for all things are now ready.

18 And they ¶ all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, ¶ I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

20 And another said, ¶ I have married a wife; and therefore I cannot come.

21 So that servant came, ¶ and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house, ¶ being angry, said to his servant, ¶ Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither

the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

22 And the servant said, Lord, ¶ it is done as thou hast commanded, ¶ and yet there is room.

23 And the Lord said unto the servant,

¶ I say unto thee, ¶ There shall yet be room there.

¶ And he said, ¶ I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

¶ And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

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¶ And he said, ¶ I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

¶ And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

¶ And another said, ¶ I have married a wife; and therefore I cannot come.

So that servant came, ¶ and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house, ¶ being angry, said to his servant, ¶ Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither

the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

And the servant said, Lord, ¶ it is done as thou hast commanded, ¶ and yet there is room.

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And the servant said, Lord, ¶ it is done as thou hast commanded, ¶ and yet there is room.

And the Lord said unto the servant,

precedency. In this case, being required to give place to his superior, and the intermediate places being occupied, he would be sent with disgrace to take the lowest seat. On the contrary, let him sit down at first in the lowest place, as claiming no honour and pre-eminence; and then the master of the house might think it proper to desire him to go up higher, which would procure him respect and deference among the other guests. Thus the Christian should deem it honour enough for him, a poor, sinful, and rebellious creature, to be admitted among the redeemed in the lowest form; and not contend for eminent stations, authority, or reputation: for such ambition only tends to disgrace. But he ought, in unaffected humility, to take the lowest station or the meanest service, preferring others to himself; and in due time he will in this manner obtain the honour that cometh from God; and he will have the approbation of angels and men at the day of judgment. For it is an universal rule of God's government, of his dealings with every individual, in respect of the various incidents and actions of their lives, that "he abases those who exalt themselves, and advances those who abase themselves," as conscious of their actual and comparative vileness and worthlessness, and as willing to be little, despised, neglected, and subjected to others. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 12—14. The Pharisee seems to have been a person of eminence; and had probably prepared an expensive entertainment for the company, (though this was on the sabbath day, and must likewise have been attended with some labour;) for perhaps the Pharisees were as ostentatious in their feasts as in their fasts. Our Lord therefore saw it proper to point out the criminality of the practice; and he counselled his host, when he made a feast, not to collect together his rich friends, relations, or neighbours, (for the epithet rich may belong equally to them all;) but

on the contrary, to invite the poor, and those who were disabled from getting the necessities or comforts of life; a great number of whom might be *feasted* with the same expense, which would be incurred to entertain a few of the rich. In this manner he would be blessed; as his guests could not recompense him except by their prayers, and he would receive his reward at the resurrection of the just. It is not to be supposed that Jesus meant absolutely and universally to prohibit men from entertaining their wealthy friends and relations; yet they who are most applauded for their useless generosity in this respect, are seldom very eminent for real charity, and not always for strict honesty; and our Lord shows his disciples a more excellent way. The profusion occasioned by feasting the rich serves to gratify a man's vanity and pride, and the sensual appetites of his friends; who in return are tempted to run into similar extravagance, of which the consequences are often very fatal. Such expenses cannot be incurred from love to God, or regard to his authority, favour, or glory; therefore no recompense can be expected from him; and human applause, or a similar banquet in return, is the only reward of them. But when a man from proper motives, expends his wealth in relieving the distressed and indigent, he derives the greatest satisfaction imaginable from this use of it, and his gracious Lord will abundantly reward it in another world. It certainly is not meant, that God will recompense, at the resurrection of the just, a proud and unbelieving liberality to the poor: but our Lord spake for the instruction of his disciples in every age; and the less they spend in "conformity to the world," by such luxurious feasting of the rich, the more they will have to employ in feeding the poor, and in all these fruits of faith and love, "which are by Christ Jesus to the praise and glory of God."

Pa. xeviii. 3 Is
xi. 10 xix. 24.
29. xxvii. 13.
xix. 5, 6 lxxv.
19, 20. Zech.
xv. 9, Mai. i.
11. Mal. xxi.
43. xxi. 9, 10.
xxviii. 19, 20.
Acts. ii. 15 x.
44-45. xi. 14.
21. xii. 47, 48.
xxviii. 6 xxi. 21.
xxv. 18.
20. xxviii. 28. Rom. x. 18 xv. 9-12. Eph. ii. 11-22. Col. i. 23. 1 Cor. xiv. 29. Gal. ii. 2, 3. Acts. ii. 15. Rom. xi. 13, 14. 1 Cor. ix. 19-23. 2 Cor. v. 11, 20. vi. 1. Col. i. 28. 2 Tim. iv. 2. 1 Thess. ii. 13-14. 1 Pet. ii. 12-13. 1 John vi. 24-27.

Go out into the high-ways, and hedges, and ^{and} compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

24 For I say unto you, ^a That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

25 ¶ And ^o there went great multitudes

with him : and he turned, and said unto them,

26 If ^a any man come to me, and ^a hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

27 And whosoever ^a doth not ^a cross, and come after me, ^a cannot be my disciple.

V. 15—24. (Notes, &c. Matt. xxii. 1—14.) The person who made the remark which gave occasion to this parable, seems to have alluded to the satisfactions to be enjoyed in the days of the Messiah, under the figure of "eating bread in the kingdom of God;" though the thought might occur to him, from what our Lord had spoken of the resurrection of the just. "Eating bread" was a common expression for any kind of meal, however plentiful or luxurious; and it is probable that the man entertained mean and carnal expectations concerning the kingdom of God. (Marg. Ref.) Our Lord, therefore, to show him how ill-suited the blessings to be conferred by the Messiah would prove to the taste of the Jews in general, and to describe their present and future conduct respecting his Gospel, spake the following parable. "The great supper" represented the plenteous provision made for the souls of men in his redemption; the previous invitation denotes the promises and prophecies of his salvation to the Jews of old, the ministry of John Baptist, and that of Christ himself and his apostles. The servants being sent to call those who had been bidden when "all things were ready," may signify the preaching of the apostles and evangelists after Christ's ascension. The concurrence of the invited persons in desiring to be excused from attendance, though on different pretences, may represent the general rejection of the Gospel by the Jewish nation, especially by their rulers, teachers, and Pharisees: the servants being then sent forth into the streets and lanes of the city, to call in the poor, lame, and blind, may intimate the success of the Gospel among the publicans and common people of the Jews; and among those who were dispersed in other countries, and the proselyted Gentiles; and when the servants were sent out into the highways and hedges, to fetch in the poor strangers and travellers, the calling of the Gentiles seems to have been principally intended, with whom the church hath since been replenished, whilst the Jews, who were first invited, are excluded from it.—The whole parable, however, may be applied to the preaching of the Gospel, and the reception that it meets with in every age. It may be further observed, that the excuses here stated were all taken from things lawful in themselves; yet, from the manner in which they were attended to, they became the occasion of the greatest contempt being shown to the feast, and to him who made it. Nothing could be more frivolous, than for one man to go to see his estate, and another to prove his oxen, (after they had been bought,) just at the hour when they were invited to the feast, when they might easily have deferred these matters to another time. The man, who ^a leadeth "that he had married a wife, and therefore could not come," is supposed, by

some, to have meant that his own marriage-feast was fixed for the same time; but as the marriage was past, the feast also may be supposed to have been over. It shows, however, that a carnal mind gives every thing the preference to Christ and his salvation, instead of using all in suberviency to it. Indeed all these excuses teach, that contempt of spiritual blessings, and inordinate attachment to worldly objects, are the real causes of men's negligence and procrastination in religious matters: and the circumstances of those, who desired to be excused, (when compared with the poverty of them who were the guests at last,) reminds us, that pride and self-sufficiency are incompatible with the faith of the Gospel. The servants were ordered to *compel* those from the high-ways and hedges to come in: it would be absurd to understand this of compulsive force, which would be a strange way of bringing men to a banquet, though vast numbers have thus explained it; which shows that scriptural arguments for persecution are not to be found. It might, however, be supposed that poor travellers or beggars would not readily be convinced that the feast was intended for them, and therefore earnest and pressing invitations would be peculiarly proper; and thus our Lord would have his ministers use most earnest and affectionate invitations, persuasions, and expostulations, and whatever can convince the understanding, or affect the heart, or give encouragement; especially when they address those who, by the greatness of their guilt, may be tempted to despair of mercy. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 25—27. As our Lord journeyed towards Jerusalem, great multitudes flocked about him: but he knew that they had generally very erroneous notions of his kingdom, and were not prepared to make the needful sacrifices, or to encounter the various dangers and difficulties, which his true disciples would certainly meet with. If, therefore, they followed him in their present temper, they would leave him in the time of trial, to the discredit of the cause, the discouragement of others, and the ruin of their own souls. He, therefore, turned himself, and addressed them in a manner which was apparently calculated to drive them from him: assuring them, that though they came to hear him, yet they could not be his disciples, except they hated their dearest relatives, and even their own lives. In a certain sense and degree, men are required to love these relations, and to take care of their own lives. But this love and regard must be entirely subordinated to their love of Christ: and they must give his favour, will, and glory, a decided preference to the approbation, interests, or comfort, or their dearest relatives; so that they may often be required to act towards them as though they *hated* them; disobeying their injunctions, thwarting their

1 Gen. xi. 4-9.
Prov. xxiv. 27.

u 33. Josh. xxi. v.
19-24. Matt.
viii. 20. x. 22.
xx. 21, 23. Acts.
xiii. 13. 1 Thea.
ii. 4, 5. 2 Pet.
i. 15, 14.

x Matt. vii. 27.
xxiii. 3-8. Acts
i. 18, 19. 1 Cor.
ii. 11-15. Heb.
vi. 4-8. x. 38.
2 Pet. ii. 19-22.
2 John 8.
v. 1 Kings xx. 11.
2 Kings xviii. 20.
-22. Prov. xx.
19. xxv. 8.

28 For which of you, ^t intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

30 Saying, * This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

31 Or what king, ^y going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth, whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that

cometh against him with twenty thousand?

32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an embassy, and desireth conditions of peace.

33 So likewise, ^a whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

34 Salt is good : ^b but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; ^c but men cast it out. ^e He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

2 xii. 50. 1 Kings
xx. 31 - 34. 2
Kings x. 4, 5.
Job xli. 9. Mat. v.
25. Acts xii. 20.
Jann. iv. 6-10.
2. 26. v. 11. 28.
xviii. 22, 23. 28.
-70. John xiii.
6. Acts x. 1-5.
viii. 13-22. 2.
Tim. iv. 10. 1.
John ii. 15, 16.
b. Mat. v. 13. Mark
ix. 49, 50. Col.
i. 6. Heb. vi. 4.
c. viii. 6. ix. 44.
Matt. xi. 15.
xiii. 9. Rev. ii.
7. 11. 17. 28.

inclinations, rejecting their entreaties, renouncing the comfort of their society, or turning it into bitterness by exciting their resentment. Nay, at some times they may be called to be, as it were, cruel to themselves, (in respect of temporal life,) as well as to their friends : exposing themselves to persecution, torture, and death, if they will obey Christ; and unless they are habitually prepared by a deep sense of their need of his salvation, and of their immense obligations to him, to venture every consequence and meet any extremity, rather than forsake him, they cannot be his disciples : for in that case they will refuse to bear their cross and to go after him. (Notes, &c. Matt. x. 37-39. xvi. 24-28. Mark viii. 34-38.)

V. 28-33. To show the importance of the subject, our Lord next inquired, whether every man of common prudence did not calculate the expense, before he began to erect a tower, that he might form a previous judgment whether he should be able to complete the work? For if a man neglected this, and, having begun to build, was afterwards compelled to leave the edifice unfinished, he would not only lose all his labour and expense, but the building itself would remain a monument of his indiscretion, and excite the derision and mockery of all that beheld it. Thus if a man should profess himself a follower of Christ, without considering what losses, trials, self-denial, or sufferings it might expose him to, or how he might be enabled to endure them, his constancy would be at length fail; all he had given up or endured would be in vain, and his apostasy would render him contemptible and miserable. The same might also be illustrated by the case of a prudent king, who would not declare war, or persist in a competition with a more powerful monarch, without considering whether his resources, situation, or alliances, were such as to give him a reasonable prospect of success: otherwise he would endeavour, whilst his enemy was at a distance, to obtain the best terms of peace that he could. To become the disciple of Christ, implies a declaration of war against Satan, sin, and this evil world, which are far too powerful for any man to withstand in his own strength: unless a sinner, therefore, be led to such a conviction of his own weakness, and of the power of his enemies, as to seek help from God, he will never stand his ground; and in all cases, the warfare will be attended with so many hardships, perils, and losses, that if a man be not aware of them, and instructed how to support them, he will

never be able to continue to the end. Though it is, therefore, desperate for him to remain in his present state of subjection to his enemies, yet it will rather make the matter worse, for him to take up a mere profession of the Gospel, without that sincerity, humility, and entire dependence on Christ, which alone can give him victory in the conflict. In like manner, "whosoever he be of you," said Jesus, "that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." It would not in general, consist with a man's duty, to leave his business and relatives, or to quit possession of his estate; but he must be prepared for it, whenever the commandment, or the providence, of God may call him to it. In this way a professed disciple will be repeatedly put to the trial; he will be called to blast his opening prospects of preferment, reputation, or riches; to renounce worldly pleasures; to forego relative comforts and agreeable friendships; and to bear losses, reproaches, and various hardships, for the sake of Christ: and in times of persecution, (such as were at hand when this was spoken,) he may be required to leave his country, friends, and possessions, to become an exile or a captive, and to part with his liberty or his life; or he cannot follow Christ as his true disciple. (Notes, Matt. xix. 16-21. Phil. iii. 7-11.) The judgment and disposition of a martyr, every Christian must possess: these will habitually be evinced in inferior concerns; and, when it becomes necessary, God will strengthen them, and enable a man to bear the greatest extremities for his sake. Many things may hereafter be expedient and useful, which are not essential to being a Christian: but this decided preference of Christ, to the whole world, and to life itself, when placed in competition with him, is the very heart, or the most vital part, of Christianity.

V. 34, 35. (Notes, Matt. v. 13. Mark ix. 49, 50.) Without that gracious preparation of heart above described, professed Christians or preachers can only be as "Salt that has lost its savour," which, instead of preserving other bodies from corruption, or giving them a pleasant relish, is itself most incurably tasteless and worthless. Such men can be no real credit or advantage to the Church, or to the world; and they are generally more incurable in their presumption and impenitence, than any other sinners. After a temporary profession they generally decline, till they totally apostatize: and they often run into destructive heresies, and endeavour to propagate them; so that they

CHAP. XV.

The Pharisees murmur at Christ for receiving sinners, 1, 2. The parable of

the lost sheep, 3—7; that of the lost piece of silver, 8—10; and that of the prodigal son, 11—32.

become the most worthless of men: and as this subject is of universal importance, it demands the serious attention of every one "that hath ears to hear." (*Marg. Ref.*) It is evident, that *salt* is here spoken of in popular language, according to the uses which are made of it in common life, and not as a chymist would define it: and that the common opinion, that the residue, when the saline particles were separated, was of no use for manure, or any other purpose, was mentioned merely by way of illustrating the subject.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—11.

We must not allow even the hospitality of those who appear friendly, to interrupt us in our duty, or induce us to be unfaithful to the truth, or to the souls of men; though the contrary conduct will probably draw on us the censure of rudeness or ingratitude. It requires reiterated and particular instruction, to bring men to understand the proper connexion of piety and charity in the observation of the sabbath; and the distinction between real works of necessity, and those which are only made so by habits of self-indulgence: and the "wisdom that is from above" is requisite, to teach us such perseverance in well doing amidst malicious and watchful opposers, as may stop their mouths even when their hearts are not changed. Ministers ought to copy Christ, in embracing every opportunity of introducing instructive discourse in all companies to which they are admitted; and in taking occasion even from men's follies and mistakes to make useful remarks. No disposition of the depraved heart of man is more odious and foolish, or more universal, than pride in its varied exercises. Yet the vain ambition of honour which is not a man's due, exposes him to contempt even among competitors for the same distinctions; and they count him as a rival, whom they delight to degrade and mortify; whilst modesty commonly tends to respect and attention. It is indeed far more honourable for a man to begin low and to be unassuming, and to be advanced by the verdict and with the consent of others, than to assume a rank and advance pretensions, to which he is singular in deeming himself entitled, and from which he is likely to be degraded with shame and contempt. But when we know our real character in the sight of God, and are made well acquainted with our own hearts, we shall proportionably be disinclined to aspire at the chief places in the Church, and shall be contented and thankful for the most obscure; and be made willing to have others honoured, and ourselves neglected and slighted in the comparison. This is in reality a far better way of being made useful, and honourable in the Lord's due time, than to aspire after high-sounding titles, or places of authority, popularity, and precedence; which cannot be coveted without forgetting what poor, guilty, polluted, weak, and foolish creatures we are. And this forgetfulness tends to abasement and degradation, by the invariable rule of the Lord's dealings with us.

V. 12—24.

Would any unbiassed observer of mankind have supposed that Christ had laid down such a rule for the conduct of all his disciples, as we here meet with? (12—14.) Who almost, whether he can or cannot afford it, doth not make expensive feasts for his rich friends and relations? What large sums are generally wasted in this manner, compared with the scanty pittance that is given to the poor? Yet what good can be expected from such a profusion, that is worthy to be put in competition with "a recompense at the resurrection of the just?" Whilst, therefore, so many prefer the vain commendation or customs of the world, or an interchange of festive indulgence, to the approbation of Christ, let us observe his precept of feasting the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind, from love to him, and to them for his sake; and let us remember, that it is peculiarly blessed to do good to those who cannot recompense us, and to labour in those services for which we receive nothing from man; for the Lord hath engaged himself, by promises, to recompense us, and his rewards are unspeakably most valuable. Let us also consider the example of Christ as it is a comment on this precept: he too hath made a great supper, by dying upon the cross for our sins, that he might feast us with holy consolations and substantial enduring felicity. Was this rich provision made for the wise and the righteous? By no means: but for sinners, rebels, and enemies to God; for the "poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind." Indeed, many are invited, yea, many are ready to say, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" But the poor in spirit, the broken-hearted sinner alone, will relish this spiritual feast: and whilst the servants from age to age are employed to invite guests, and to assure "them that all things are ready," and that pardon, peace, grace, and eternal life are freely bestowed on all, who apply for them in the name of Christ; instead of thankfully accepting the invitation, even they, who do not proceed to greater instances of contempt and enmity, "begin with one consent to make excuse," and desire leave to continue in sin, at least for some time longer! They have no desire after this feast, nor any regard to him who prepared it; and so are not fearful of being excluded: and thus any worldly engagement, amusement, or attachment, suffices as a pretence for "neglecting so great salvation." Not only do men destroy their souls for great secular advantages, or by gross outward sins, but they so misplace even lawful things, and act so carnally even in the ordinary affairs of life, that they perish by such matters, as might have been attended to with greater advantage, had they "sought first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Alas, that men should be so sensibly alive to their little temporal interests, to their credit among neighbours, and to the success of their carnal projects; and yet so careless, where the favour, or wrath of God, and eternal happiness or misery are at stake! But the god of this world blinds their minds, and renders them insensible to the awful conse-

æ. v. 29-32 vii.
23 xiii. 39 E.
xviii. 27. 28
Mat. ix. 10-
12. xxi. 23-31. Rom. v. 20 1 Tim. 13

THEN ^adrew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

quences of their procrastination, till the Lord gives sentence against them, "that," after the repeated invitations which have been rejected, "they shall never taste of his "supper." These things grieve the hearts of faithful ministers, who go and complain to their Lord of the folly and perverseness of their hearers: but though he is angry with obstinate unbelievers, he will not suffer the feast to be provided in vain: if the rich, the learned, the self-wise, and self-righteous, put it from them with neglect and disdain, he bids his servants go without delay into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in thence the publicans and harlots. And as "yet there is abundance of room," and plenty of provisions, he orders some of them to go without the precincts of the visible Church, to bring in the sinners of the Gentiles that have never yet heard of his name, till his house be filled with guests. Oh, that he would be pleased to inspire many ministers with that zeal and love, which would animate them to "compel sinners "to come in;" and to be earnest, affectionate, solemn, and awful, in calling the vilest of transgressors to repentance, and faith in Christ! But! alas, some, mistaking God's *secret decrees for their rule of duty*, and confounding man's disposition to good with the Lord's right to demand it of him, are thus restrained from exhorting, inviting, and persuading sinners at all; and far greater numbers are contented with a cold unmeaning harangue; as if they did not wish to be thought in earnest in calling men to that feast, for which it is to be feared themselves have no appetite.

V. 25-35.

Though man ought to use means with all assiduity and earnestness, God alone can prevail with sinners to partake of his salvation. Great multitudes may indeed attend on the Gospel; and the opportunity should be embraced of warning and instructing them with all faithfulness: but unless they are taught supremely to value spiritual blessings, and to feel their perishing need of Christ, they will by no means become his true disciples. Indeed, by far the greater number of teachers state this matter very conveniently; and by smooth words induce men to conclude, that they may enjoy the world and the privileges of the Gospel at that same time: and whilst "many follow their pernicious "ways, by reason of whom the way of truth is evil "spoken of," it has almost become obsolete, (at least very unfashionable, even where some doctrines of the Gospel are preached,) to declare the necessity of acting as if we hated our nearest relatives, or our own lives, if we would be Christ's disciples. It is to be feared, that many dream that they are interested in the cross of Christ, who were never willing to bear the cross for him; and who neither renounce their worldly interests, nor mortify their lusts, in order to follow him! But unless we mean to build a Babel, as an eternal monument of our folly and madness, we must count our cost when we take up a profession of the Gospel. It may cost us our lives, and it will expose us to losses, difficulties, and hardships: and if we are not

2 And ^bthe Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, 'This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

b. 29. 30. v. 30.
vii. 31. 32. x. 11.
7. Mat. ix. 11.
A. D. 33. 3. 1
Cor. v. 9-11.
Gal. ii. 12.

prepared to give up iniquitous gain, forbidden indulgences, and the friendship of the world, and to bear ridicule and reproach, the displeasure or loss of friends, and many things of this kind, how should we be able to forsake all, and lay down our lives for Christ? But whilst men shrink from the perils and sufferings of a warfare with sin and Satan, let them also reflect how dreadful their case must be, if they continue exposed to the wrath of God! If on any terms they have made their peace with him, they may bear, resist, and overcome every thing by his grace; but who can help them against his omnipotent indignation? These considerations therefore should not deter them from following Christ, but stir them up to seek help from him to do it effectually and constantly; that they may not be as salt that has lost its savour, which is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill. May we then seek to be disciples indeed, and be careful not to grow slack in our profession, or afraid of the cross; that we may be the good salt of the earth, to season all around us with the savour of Christ and his heavenly truth!

NOTES.

CHAP. XV. V. 1, 2. Some expositors suppose our Lord to have been at this time beyond Jordan, on the borders of the Gentiles, and that many of them attended his ministry: but this is highly improbable; for "he "received and ate with," the sinners here mentioned; but "he was made under the law," and perfectly fulfilled it; though he disregarded the traditions of the elders, and it was generally considered as a violation of the law, to eat with those who were uncircumcised, and did not observe the distinction of clean and unclean meats. Had he eaten with Gentiles, his apostles would hardly have scrupled it after his ascension, as they most evidently did. Yet it is probable that he ate with the Samaritans, when he staid two days at Sychar: and accordingly we find that the apostles readily went among those Samaritans who embraced the Gospel. They indeed were circumcised, and observed the distinction of meats; but they were heretics and schismatics, and abhorred by the Jews. The publicans and other notorious sinners, however, in the neighbourhood, with one consent, came to *hear his instructions*, and not merely to gratify curiosity, or to obtain the cure of their diseases. Probably, many of them were touched with a sense of their need of repentance and forgiveness: and our Lord not only instructed them, but sat at table with them, without any scruple, as he had been used to do in other places. This excited the murmurs and reproaches of the Pharisees and Scribes, who observed, with astonishment and indignation, that he acted entirely contrary to their maxims. As these were generally regarded to be oracles of wisdom and models of piety, their frown was likely to discourage the poor trembling sinners; but to prevent this effect, as well as to check and expose their arrogant spirit, Jesus vindicated his own conduct, and described the gracious dealings of God with sinners in three parables, which all agree in many of the same great

xiii 15 Matt.
xii. 11. Rom. ii
1
d. Ps. cxix 176 19
iii 6 Jer. i 6
Ez. xxxiv 8 11
12. 16. 31. Matt.
xviii 12. 13
John x 15. 16
26—28 1 Pet.
3—7

C. xix. 9 xxi 43
Is. xlii. 12. John
iv. 24. 35. A. vi
ix. 1—15 Rom.
8. 20. 21. Eph.
ii 3—8 Tit. iii
3—7

f. Is. xl 10. 11.
xvii 3, 4. Is. xlii
10. 11. Jer.
9 Jer. v. 4
Eph. i. 19. 20
ii. 10. iii. 7
Thes. i 2 Tim. i
11. 2 Tim. ii
26. 1 Pet. i. 6
6. 23. 24. 32. Is.
liii 10. 11. Is.
5 Jer. xxxii 41
42. Ez. xviii 23
xxxiii. 11. Mic. vii 18. Zeph. iii 17. John xv 11. Heb. xii. 2 —b. 7. 10. 24. 11. 13
14. 15. Is. vi 10. 11. John iii 29. xv 14. Acts x 13. 23. xv 3. Phil. i. 4. ii. 17. 19. 1. 1 Thes.
ii. 19. iii. 7—9 —1 32 v 32 Matt. xviii. 13.

3 And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

5 And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

7 I say unto you, That likewise joy

shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

8 ¶ Either what woman, having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?

9 And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

10 Likewise, I say unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

outlines, though they place the subject in different lights, to make it the more clearly understood. 'Publicans, gross sinners, and heathens, were by the Scribes and Pharisees judged unfit to be conversed with, even though it were with a design to reduce them from their evil courses, they thinking God had cast off the care of them; and had no design to grant them "repentance unto life;" whence they abhorred their company, and never would concern themselves to make them better.' (*Whitby*.)

V. 3—7. (*Notes*, Matt. xviii. 12—14.) The lost sheep in this emblem represents the sinner, as departed from God, and exposed without help to manifold dangers and certain ruin, if not brought back to him; yet as utterly indisposed to return. Christ is the Owner, or Shepherd, of his chosen and purchased flock, and counts them his property even when in their sinful state. As a man would leave the rest of his flock in the pastures of the wilderness, being comparatively safe, to go and seek one lost sheep: so Christ is particularly earnest in bringing home sinners to his Church from their perilous wanderings; and he considers this as much his work, as taking care of those who are already brought back. The owner of the flock sought the lost sheep till he found it, and then laid it on his shoulders rejoicing: thus Christ by his word and providence seeks out the lost sinner, and by his Spirit overcomes his unwillingness to return to God; by his power he delivers him from the bondage of sin and Satan, and carries him above the temptations of this evil world; and he rejoices in thus bringing him back to the favour and service of God, by repentance, faith, and true conversion. As he who had found his lost sheep, might be supposed to call on his friends and neighbours to rejoice with him on that account, rather than because the other ninety-nine had not strayed, so our Lord declared, that "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth:" the Lord himself rejoices, and all his holy worshippers rejoice with him on that account; even "more than over ninety and "nine just persons who need no repentance." This may be differently explained. Angels are perfectly righteous and need no repentance: yet the repentance of a sinner on earth, taken in connexion with its causes and consequences, redounds more to the glory of God, and there-

fore causes more joy in heaven, than the continuance of angels in their primitive state of rectitude. Some believers have been preserved from that degree of outward vice and impiety, to which others have been left: but the conversion of the latter being more unexpected and surprising, as well as the more signal display of divine power and mercy, may be considered as exciting far louder acclamations of joy and praise, than that of such as comparatively "needed no repentance." Every Christian in his turn has occasioned this joy in heaven; but it is the cause of renewed joy, when another and another is brought to repentance; and this joy is more sensibly felt and expressed, every time one more is added to the company of the redeemed, than it is on account of the ninety and nine that are already brought home, and have no further occasion for that entire repentance from dead works, which the newly awakened sinner exercises: even as a father rejoices more in the unexpected recovery of one son who was given over for dead; than in the health and safety of his other children, whom yet he loves with equal tenderness. But doubtless our Lord intended more immediately to address the Pharisees, according to their own opinion of themselves. They proudly fancied that they needed no repentance; yet the conversion of one publican or harlot was far more pleasing and honourable to God, and matter of far more joy in heaven, than the formality and decency of any number of those who yet thought themselves exclusively the sheep of his pasture: and the Publican's tears of godly sorrow, and broken cries for mercy, were far more acceptable, than all their long prayers and ostentatious austerities.

V. 8—10. The purport of this parable is nearly the same with that of the preceding: it shows the value Christ puts upon the souls of his people. They are his property, the fruit of his toil and sufferings; and he will use proper means to find them out, and bring them home to his Church; and then all who love him will be called to rejoice with him on that account: so that "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth." The true repentance of a sinner implies his deliverance from eternal misery, and his being made an heir of everlasting felicity. It is a trophy of Christ's victory over the powers of darkness, and a blessed effect of

20. xvi. 18
xviii. 9—11.
Prov. xxi 12
Rom. vii. 9
Phil. iii. 6, 7.
Drachma, here
translated a
piece of silver,
is the sixth of
an ounce, and
equal to the
Roman penny.
Matt. xviii. 28.
Morg
i xix 10 Ez.
xxxiv 12. John
x. 1—5. Heb. i.
Eph. ii. 17.
m. 6, 7
n. ii. 19—14. Mat.
xviii. 10. 11.
xviii. 5—7.
Acts v 19, 20
x. 2—5. Heb. i.
14. Heb. v 11—
14
o. vii. 47. xiii. 5
2 Chr. xxiii.
13—19. Matt.
xviii 14. Acts
xvii 14. 2 Cor.
xii 10

11 ¶ And he said, "A certain man had two sons:

12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

12. Am vi 3-7. Rom. xiii. 13, 14. 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4. 2 Pet. ii. 13.

his atoning sacrifice. A monument is thus raised up to the glory of divine mercy and grace, that shall continue to all eternity: a worshipper of God is added to his Church, who will glorify him for ever: a man, before unprofitable and mischievous, and who would otherwise have subserved the cause of Satan during the rest of his days, is now made the disciple and servant of Jesus Christ, to do his will and promote his Gospel, by his example, prayers, endeavours, and the use of his abilities, as long as he lives. As then angels love the Lord and hate iniquity; as they are free from pride, enmity, and envy, and filled with benevolence; they must rejoice exceedingly with the divine Saviour, whenever they are made acquainted with any work of his grace, which is of such vast and everlasting importance, as even the repentance of one single sinner. All true Christians rejoice and praise God for the appearance of this happy change in the temper and conduct of any person, within the circle of their acquaintance, in exact proportion to the degree of their humility, zeal, and love; these dispositions are perfect in the angels, and the gracious change may be fully certified to them; we may therefore conclude, that their acclamations of joyful praise will be proportionably fervent and rapturous, most honourable to God, and an accession to their own felicity. In this declaration the Pharisees might see, as in a glass, the hatefulness of their own temper and conduct: and nothing could be more suited to give encouragement to the poor sinners who came to hear our Lord's instructions. The good Shepherd himself rejoices over the lost sheep, when found, and the Father over the returning prodigal; and therefore some expositors seem to confine the "joy in heaven," to God himself, who rejoices in the presence of his angels. But the good Shepherd called on all his friends to rejoice with him; and the whole family rejoiced when the prodigal returned: so that, doubtless, angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, participate the joy of God our Saviour, when one sinner repenteth; as it is intimated in each of these parables. (Marg. Ref.) 'This consideration should inflame the zeal, and quicken the industry of the spiritual shepherd for the conversion of sinners; as knowing this is a work highly acceptable to the God of heaven, and that for which he sent "the great Shepherd of the sheep," into the world.' (Whitby).

V. 11, 12. The preceding parables chiefly illustrate the importance of a sinner's conversion, in the judgment of God himself, and his angels: but this further shows the nature of repentance, and the most gracious reception which the truly penitent, however vile they have been,

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

12 Col. iii 5-7. Tit. iii 3. — y Is xlvii 20 lv. 2. Lam. iv 5. Hos. xii 1. Rom. vi. 13-21. — 2 Ps. cxliii. 4. Is lvi 13. Jon. ii 2-10.

experience from our merciful God and Father. In them the exposed and helpless condition of lost sinners is represented; but in this the rebellion and ingratitude of their conduct is exhibited. Many suppose, that the Jews and Gentiles are represented by the two sons: but the occasion on which the parable was spoken shows, that the Pharisees were primarily intended by "the elder Son;" and the publicans, and other immoral and irreligious Jews, by the younger. The same distinction between formal and moral persons, and those of more scandalous lives, is found in every Christian country: and the two companies include all, except the remnant of penitent believers. The situation, however, of the idolatrous nations, compared with that of the Jews, and the conversion of the former, with the indignation of the latter, might also be prophetically intended. The case of the younger son is first and more largely described. We are led to consider him as having been well educated and kindly treated by a pious, prudent, and affectionate father, in whose family he had every profitable indulgence: but, without cause, he ungratefully demanded the portion of his goods that fell to his share. This accords to the foolish and perverse conduct of many children, who grow weary of the good rules and subordination of their parent's family, and want to be from under their rule and out of their sight, vainly supposing that they can manage better for themselves, than their parents do for them: and instead of being thankful for the persevering care and tenderness of their parents in former years, they think themselves entitled to "a portion of goods," as if they had a legal claim to it. But it also aptly describes the temper of sinners respecting God: notwithstanding his providential kindness and the reasonableness of his commands, they cast off all regard to his authority, and endeavour to break loose from the impressions of a religious education, (if they have been favoured with one): they count themselves entitled to a large share of worldly possessions, and murmur if not thus indulged; and they foolishly imagine that they shall best enjoy themselves, when they most forget or rebel against God. The father's division of his substance between his sons may be considered as an illustration of his kindness, and an aggravation of this prodigal's guilt in leaving him: and it shows that God often indulges men in their carnal inclinations, that they may be more inexcusable in rebellion, and may know by experience the folly of their own choice.

V. 13-16. The younger son is then described as journeying with all his property into a far country, as if he meant to traffic with it; but in fact that he might receive

17 And ^a when he came to himself, he said, ^b How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18 I ^c will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, ^d Father, ^e I have sinned ^f against heaven, and before thee,

19 And am ^g no more worthy to be called thy son: ^h make me as one of thy hired servants.

20 And he arose, and came to his father. ⁱ But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, ^k and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, ^l Father, I have sinned ^m against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

no more counsel or control from his father: this represents the prosperous sinner's increasing impiety, and disregard of God; and the prodigal's "wasting his substance" "in riotous living" shadows forth the abuse that men make of the bounty of Providence, by spending it on their lusts, and the manner in which they often ruin their health, and shorten their lives by excess. The prodigal is next described as having "spent all;" and a famine at the same time prevailing in the land, he was soon deserted by his companions and flatterers, and began to be destitute. This shows the wasting transient nature of ungodly pleasure and prosperity, and the tendency of sin to produce misery; and also that the Lord often visits the sinner with additional afflictions, especially when he purposes to bring him to repentance. But the prodigal was yet too stout-hearted to return home, disgraced and impoverished, and submit to his offended father; and therefore he hired himself as a servant to a person in that distant country, who, deeming him fit for no other service, sent him into his fields to feed swine. This was a mean employment in itself; but among the Jews, to whom those animals were ceremonially unclean, it might be considered as the greatest debasement imaginable, especially to one who had been brought up in affluence: yet, as if the hardship and disgrace had been too little, he was not allowed to satisfy the cravings of his appetite with the husks, or coarse wild fruits, on which the swine fed; though, for want of other food, he earnestly desired it: so that he was reduced to the extreme danger of perishing by hunger. Thus the sinner, when suffering under the effects of his transgressions, instead of repenting and humbling himself before God, often plunges still deeper into the basest of crimes, and sells himself to Satan, that most cruel of masters, to work iniquity of the worst kind: and yet he sometimes can scarcely obtain the meanest sustenance, and grows more and more despicable and miserable, having nothing but destruction before his eyes!

V. 17—19. Having viewed the prodigal in his most abject state of servitude and misery, we are next to consider his recovery from it. This began "when he came" "to himself;" he had been infatuated and frantic, and had acted as a man bereft of his understanding, having been blinded both to his interests and obligations: but, by means of his afflictions, he was brought to serious consideration, and to form a more just opinion of his own conduct and situation. Thus "He who lives a sinful life is beside himself: for, being a rational creature, and having a

judgment and conscience to direct him, he acts against his reason, his judgment, and his conscience." (*Whitby*.) But when he is converted, the Lord opens his eyes, and convinces him of sin, and then he views himself and every object around him in a new light, and so he forms a contrary judgment respecting almost every thing, from what he had before done. The first thought that occurred to the prodigal, "when come to himself," related to the plenty in which his father's *menial servants* lived, and his own misery, compared even with *their* condition. Though numerous, they had bread enough and to spare; whilst he, who once lived as a son in that happy family, and might still have done so, had it not been for his own sin and folly, was perishing with hunger! Thus the convinced sinner perceives that his own wickedness hath reduced him to a state of misery and extreme peril, from which he cannot escape, except he return to God, whose meanest servant is happier than he. Accordingly the prodigal resolved to "arise, and go to his Father," and without attempting to excuse or palliate his conduct, or cast any blame on others, as is usual in such cases; to acknowledge that in his ungrateful disobedience to him he had sinned against the God of heaven also: that he was not deserving to be admitted into his family as a son; and entreating his father not to leave him to perish, but to employ him in the work, and to give him the maintenance, of a hired servant: in forming this resolution he drew his whole encouragement from the recollection of his father's goodness, which at the same time aggravated his own criminality. In like manner convinced sinners are led to hope in the mercy of that God, against whom they have rebelled: and are excited to return to him with unreserved and ingenuous confession and earnest supplications: and whenever brought to this spirit, they may address him as a kind Father, though conscious that they are unworthy to be called his children.

V. 20, 21. According to his purpose, the prodigal not regarding himself bound by his engagement to his cruel master, set out on his journey home, nor stopped till he came thither; though in such a case we may conceive how he must be distressed with fears, lest his father should reject or upbraid him, as well as have many other hardships to endure. But when he was yet at a distance, his father, (who is represented as regretting his absence, and desiring his return,) saw and knew him; and, forgetting all his son's provocations, yea, and overlooking his own years and dignity, being full of compassion, he *ran* and fell on

Rom ii. 4.—Ps li. 4. cxliii. 2. 1 Cor xiii. 12.

a Ps. xlv. 13.
 cxxii. 9, 16 1a
 i. xi. 10 Ez. xvi.
 9-13. Zech. iii.
 2, 4. Matt. xxiii.
 11, 12 Rom. iii.
 22, xiii. 14 Gal.
 27 Eph. iv.
 22-24 Rev. iii.
 4, 5 1st. vi. 11.
 vii. 9 13, 14.
 22, 23 8.
 c Gen. xli. 42.
 Esther. 10 vii.
 8 Rom. vii. 15.
 Gal. iv. 5, 6.
 Eph. i. 13, 14.
 Rev. ii. 17.
 p. Dact. xxiii.
 25 Ps. xviii. 33.
 Cant. vii. 1 Ez.
 30. Eph. vii. 15.
 Gen. xvii. 7.
 Isai. 5 Prov. ix.
 2. Is. xxxvi. 2.
 13, 14 Mat. xxii.
 2, 3.
 r 32 Mat. vii. 22.
 John v. 21, 24.
 28, 31 Rom. vi.
 13, vii. 2 2 Cor.
 v. 14, 15 Eph. ii.
 1 Col. ii. 13.
 1 Tim. v. 6.
 Jude 12. Rev.
 iii. 1.
 s 4. r. xix. 10.
 Gen. xiv. 8. Jer. xxxi. 15-17. Matt. xviii. 11-13. — 1. 7, 9, 10. Ec. ix. 7, 10, 15.
 xxxv. 10 Isai. vii. xxxi. 12-14. Rom. xii. 15. 1 Cor. xii. 26. — u. 12. — x. vii.
 32. Ez. xv. 20. 2 Sam. vi. 14. Ps. xxxi. 11. cxlii. 3-cl. 4. Ec. iii. 4. Jer. xxxi. 4. 13.
 y 30. Acts. ix. 17. xxi. 13. Philom. 16 — z 23.

22 But the father said to his servants,
 Bring forth ^a the best robe, and put ^a it
 on him; and put ^a a ring on his hand,
 and shoes on ^a his feet:

23 And bring hither ^a the fatted calf,
 and kill ^a it; and let us eat, and be merry:

24 For ^a this my son was dead, and is
 alive again; ^a he was lost, and is found.
 And they began to be merry.

25 Now ^a his elder son was in the
 field: and as he came and drew nigh to
 the house, ^a he heard music and dancing,

26 And he called one of the servants,
 and asked what these things meant.

27 And he said unto him, ^y Thy brother
 is come: ^z and thy father hath killed
 the fatted calf, because he hath received
 him safe and sound.

28 And ^a he was angry, and would not
 go in: ^a therefore came his father out, and
 entreated him.

29 And he answering, said to ^a his father,
 Lo, these many years do I serve thee;
 neither transgressed I at any time thy
 commandment; and ^a yet thou never
 gavest me a kid, that I might make merr-
 y with my friends:

30 But as soon as ^a this thy son was
 come, which hath ^a devoured thy living
 with harlots, thou hast killed for him the
 fatted calf.

31 And he said unto him, ^s Son, thou
 art ever with me, and all that I have is
 thine.

32 It ^b was meet that we should make
 merry, and be glad: ^b for this thy brother
 was dead, and is alive again; and was
 lost, and is found.

his neck and kissed him; expressing his joy at his arrival,
 and his entire reconciliation to him. (*Marg. Ref.*) Whilst
 the son, being the more ashamed of his own misconduct
 by his father's kindness, acknowledged his guilt and un-
 worthiness, in the words which he had premeditated; save
 that he omitted the latter clause, either interrupted by his
 father, or not counting it necessary, seeing he was wel-
 come as a son. Thus the penitent sinner quits the
 bondage of Satan, and returns to God by faith and prayer,
 amidst a variety of fears and difficulties: and the Lord
 readily meets him with unexpected tokens of his forgiving
 love. These tend still further to humble his heart, though
 they inspire him with more confidence of hope in the
 mercy of his gracious Lord. 'After sin is pardoned, it
 becomes the sinner ingenuously to confess and acknow-
 ledge it.' (*Whitby.*) (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 22—24. Whilst the prodigal was confessing his
 guilt, the father ordered the servants to bring "the best
 robe," that he might be clothed as it became his beloved
 son to be; and to "put a ring on his hand, and shoes on
 his feet;" and then to prepare a feast for him and them,
 that they might rejoice together over one, who had been as
 dead and lost to his family and friends, but was now
 returned alive and well. So the humble sinner is clothed
 in the robe of the Redeemer's righteousness, made par-
 taker of the Spirit of adoption, prepared by peace of con-
 science and gospel grace to walk with pleasure in the ways
 of holiness, and feasted with divine consolations; whilst
 the whole family of God rejoices at his being restored as a
 child to his father's house, and recovered from the death
 of sin to the life of righteousness. (*Marg. Ref. Note,*
Eph. ii.)

V. 25—32. In the subsequent part of this parable we
 have the character of the Pharisees delineated, in respect
 of their most prominent feature. Had they been as right-
 eous as they thought themselves, their conduct towards
 the publicans and sinners, would have been very unreason-
 able. On this ground our Lord took the opportunity of

expostulating with them; as on other occasions he exposed
 their hypocrisy and wickedness. The elder son is repre-
 sented as having been in the field employed in labour: but
 when he returned, and heard the unexpected expressions of
 festive rejoicing, he inquired the reason; and being told
 on what account the feast was made, he was angry and
 would not go in. This represented the Pharisees, though
 not them alone. They were exact in external duties, but
 proud of their goodness; they deemed themselves the pec-
 uliar favourites of heaven, and could not endure that
 publicans and abandoned sinners should receive any encour-
 agement. They not only abhorred them when living in
 sin, but even when they appeared penitent; they would not
 eat with them, and deemed it very criminal in Jesus that
 he would: and they rejected the Gospel with the greater
 disdain, because such vile persons were admitted to share
 its blessings: as the Jews also did afterwards, when the
 Gentiles were called into the Church. Thus when angels
 and the Lord of angels were rejoicing over penitent and
 pardoned sinners, they envied, murmured, and raged! The
 father is next described, as going out to entreat his
 son to come in; but he answered with boastings and com-
 plaints. He had done the work of a servant for many
 years, and had never at any time disobeyed his father; yet
 his father had never given him so much as a kid, that he
 might feast with his friends: but now that his prodigal son,
 (whom he disdained to acknowledge as a brother,) was
 returned home, after having consumed his wealth, and im-
 impoverished the family as far as he could, by debauchery,
 he had killed for him the fatted calf! This represents the
 condescension of the Lord, in persuading even proud ob-
 jectors to accept his salvation, and the arrogant manner in
 which such invitations are often received. The Pharisees
 supposed that there was great merit in their strict and
 constant services; and because they were not guilty of the
 outward scandals which they charged on the publicans, they
 deemed themselves exempt from all blame: yet they had
 never experienced those joys in religion, to which the

CHAP. XVI.

The parable of the unjust steward; and

*the instructions contained in it, 1—3.
Jesus reproves the hypocrisy of the Pha-*

penitent sinners professed to be admitted. It is well known that the Jews in general were of the same spirit, respecting the converted Gentiles; and numbers in every age object to the Gospel and its preachers, on similar grounds. To this proud, rude, ungrateful reply, the father meekly answered, that, as his son, he was ever with him, sharing the provisions of his family, and continually receiving tokens of his favour; and that he was the acknowledged heir of all his substance, though no feast had expressly been made on his account, because he had never left home. But that it was meet that they should all rejoice over his *brother*, who had so unexpectedly been reclaimed from his evil courses, and restored to the family, as one that was alive from the dead. Expositors have been greatly perplexed in applying this latter part of the parable: yet the difficulty will vanish, if we advert to the general scope of it. Had it been *true*, that the Pharisees were the favourites of heaven, and had always been obedient and deserving, their present privileges would have been continued to them, and their future inheritance secure, and undiminished by the favour shown to the publicans. The same would have been the case with the Jews, (notwithstanding the calling of the Gentiles,) if they had been indeed the children of believing Abraham. So that they could not be deprived of the blessing, except they were found among unbelievers and hypocrites. In the mean time, it was meet that all the servants of God should rejoice with him over the repentance and reconciliation of the poor publicans and harlots, by which his name would be glorified and immortal souls saved. They were of the same nature and nation with the Pharisees who disdained them; and the less hope there had been of their conversion, the more it ought to be rejoiced in. Thus our Lord closed the subject, not seeing good at that time to push the argument further against the Pharisees; whom he left to contemplate as in a glass the unreasonableness of their *own* conduct that they might be induced to give up their objections, and to apply for a share in the blessings of his Gospel: even as the refractory son was invited to come in and partake of the feast. As the elder son is not represented to have returned any answer to his father, and it is not said, that he went in, or that he did not, we may suppose our Lord to mean, that they ought to be satisfied with this statement of the matter, and that some of them would be so; but that others would remain sullen and untractable, after all that could be said to convince them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—10.

When the vilest sinners draw near to hear the Gospel, they should be addressed with compassion, as well as plainness of speech, and never be driven away with contempt and upbraidings: nor should we shun to go among them for their good, however the self-wise and self-righteous may murmur or revile. Nay, it is reasonable for us to bestow peculiar attention on them; as the lost sheep excites the shepherd's chief regard; and his labour in seeking,

and joy at finding it, are far greater than he exercises about the sheep that remain in the pasture. Indeed we "all have been as sheep going astray;" and he, on whom "were laid the iniquities of us all," comes to seek us, one after another, and rejoices in using his almighty power in bringing us back to his chosen flock; and he requires all who have been thus restored, and all who love him, to rejoice over every such instance of his abundant grace. Let us then leave it to those, who think that they have made themselves to differ, or "that they need no repentance," to refuse their tribute of joyful praise on such occasions. We know, (if we be indeed true believers,) that there is joy in heaven over every weeping penitent, more than over ninety and nine such proud and formal professors. But shall the Lord do so much, and employ so many means and instruments, to bring sinners home to himself; shall Christians, ministers, angels, yea, the Lord of angels, deem the repentance of one sinner a matter of such vast importance, and such cordial rejoicing; and shall sinners themselves not think it worth while to bestow any pains in seeking for this inestimable blessing? Shall they not desire to cause holy joy in heaven by repenting, who have excited a malignant joy in hell by their crimes? What immense encouragement also does this assurance give the weeping penitent, in coming to the compassionate Saviour! And what care should we all employ to be assured, that our repentance is "unto salvation not to be repented of!" We may also conclude with certainty, that the powers of darkness will never be allowed to rejoice in the final ruin of those, over whom angels have thus rejoiced. And we may be excited to employ our labours, and pour out our prayers with all earnestness, for the conversion of sinners around us; for if one only should be rescued by our means from destruction, and brought into the way of everlasting felicity, it will immensely over-pay all the labours of our whole lives. Nor should we yield to enfeebling discouragement, when our zealous labours seem very little successful; for perhaps, while we complain and grieve that we "labour in vain," and spend our strength for nought;" and while others may suppose we are doing nothing, angels are rejoicing over one and another, by our means brought to true repentance.

V. 11—16.

Whilst we allow that some sinners run to greater lengths in rebellion and impiety than others, we may all of us discern some features of our own character in that of the prodigal son. Have we not counted the service of God a burden, and his commands and restraints grievous? Have we not coveted a worldly portion, and wanted to be independent of God? Have we not murmured when outward abundance hath been withheld, and abused the blessings bestowed upon us? Have we not gone far from God, and endeavoured to forget him, when indulging our appetites and passions? Whilst many have been ruined by prosperity in sin, may not some of us be thankful that we have been afflicted and disappointed? that our expected

rises, who deride him; and speaks of the introduction of the Gospel, 14—18.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus, 19—31.

enjoyments have been embittered, the materials of them torn from us, and our own iniquities made to correct us? Yet even in this case have not *some of us*, have not numbers, plunged still deeper into wickedness, and become more entirely the servants of Satan, in the very midst of sufferings? Let us also reflect on the fading nature of earthly enjoyments, the instability of prosperity, and the unfaithfulness of companions in vice, who readily leave those to perish, whom they have once flattered and caressed for their own selfish purposes. And what a vile master is Satan, who allures men by the hopes of sensual and worldly pleasure, and then reduces numbers to the most abject penury, disease, contempt, and wretchedness! But the change in the prodigal's situation, when, from the credit and indulgences of his father's family, he was reduced to feed swine, and want even husks to satisfy his hunger, but feebly shadows forth the fall of man, by sin, from the image, favour, and enjoyment of God, to be a condemned rebel, a slave of Satan, an heir of hell, and a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction. Yet, alas! how few are sensible that this is their real state and character!

V. 17—24.

Happy are they, who by means of any afflictions are made to see the madness and folly of their rebellion against God! With what new eyes do they then begin to behold the divine character and law, their own obligations and conduct, their interest and duty, their state and prospects! The sinner, when "he is come to himself, is made sensible that he is a wretch undone; and that the meanest of those servants of God, whom he formerly despised, is happy, compared with him. He discovers that there is no hope of escaping destruction, except by repentance and returning unto God; the riches of whose goodness and mercy will give him his sole encouragement to repent, and hope for pardon: he sees and confesses the greatness of his guilt and its manifold aggravations, which before he palliated, excused, or gloried in: he allows himself to be utterly unworthy of those blessings, which from the goodness of God he enjoyed and ungratefully despised; and he is rendered willing to submit to any abasement or self-denial, if he may but be admitted into the number of the Lord's servants, and be preserved from impending destruction. Nor will he rest in recollections; speculations, or good purposes, to be realized at some future period: without delay he will arise from sloth, or despondency; break his league with sin; encounter difficulties with resolution and perseverance; "cease to do evil, learn to do well;" use the means of grace, and endeavour to mortify sinful propensities, and perform self-denying duties, even upon a peradventure that the Lord may have mercy upon him: and he will proceed in this course, though harassed with fears lest his sins should be unpardonable, or lest he should finally be rejected. But when our gracious Lord hath thus humbled sinners, and led them to justify him by condemning themselves, to submit to his will, and to seek mercy in his appointed way, he will not delay to come to

their relief and comfort. He sees all their remorse and anguish, he witnesses their groans and tears, he hears and accepts their broken petitions and confessions; and he never upbraids those, who loathe and abhor themselves. (*Marg. Ref.*) This genuine repentance is increased by every fresh discovery of the Lord's goodness and mercy: and tokens of forgiveness render the heart more contrite, godly sorrow more ingenuous, and confessions of guilt more unreserved. Thus a blessed reconciliation takes place between an offended God and a vile transgressor of his laws: and whilst the broken-hearted penitent feels himself unworthy of the least favour, his heavenly Father puts him in full possession of all the blessings of his salvation, seals him with the Spirit of adoption, and comforts him beyond his largest hopes. Thus he is encouraged, animated, and even constrained, by redeeming love, to walk with pleasure in the ways of holy obedience; and his services will be as much superior to those of formal Pharisees, as his joy in the Lord exceeds their conception and experience. Then angels and saints rejoice, that the lost sinner is found, that the dead is raised, and that the rebel is reconciled. And let it be here hinted, that this is an example, which parents especially are called to imitate in their conduct towards their children; when, having been very disobedient and profligate, they *come to themselves*, desire to return to their duty, and to obtain forgiveness of the past.

V. 25—32.

How hateful must that disposition be *in a sinner*, which leads him to repine at an event that fills all the holy inhabitants of heaven with rejoicing! Which excites him to despise and abhor those, for whom the Saviour shed his precious blood, who are the objects of the Father's special choice, and the temples of the Holy Spirit! And which induces a worm on earth to disdain *him* as a brother, whom the God of heaven hath numbered among his children! It is very wrong to despair of those, who are living in the most abandoned profligacy and impiety. Who can tell, but they may be brought to repentance? For "where sin hath abounded, grace much more abounds." We ought therefore to hope, to pray, and to labour, for their conversion. But to disdain those, who repent, believe, rejoice in God, and live to his glory, because of those crimes which are now "buried in the depths of the sea," must spring from pride, self-preference, and ignorance of a man's own heart. Where this disposition is habitual and allowed, it far more than counterbalances all external decency of conduct: and he who boasts of his unremitted obedience, as if he had never transgressed God's commandments; who complains of the Lord's dealings with him, as if he were not suitably rewarded; who grudges the favour shown to returning prodigals, and disdains their company; and who quarrels with the Gospel for giving them encouragement; this man is of a more hateful disposition than the profligates whom he abhors, and as far from the spirit of Christ and the temper of angels, as the vilest debauchee on earth; however moral he may be in

u xl 41 xiv. 11.
Prov. xiii. 12.
Is. lv. 1. 7. 3.
Dan. iv. 27.
Matt. x. 10.
xxv. 35-40.
Acts x. 4. 31.
2 Cor. ix. 12.
15 1 Tim. v. 17-19.
2 Tim. i. 16-18.
x. 11-13. Matt.
v. 24.
e Or riches. Prov.
xiii. 12. 1 Tim.
vi. 9. 10. 17.
y Ps lxxviii. 26.
Ec. xix. 3-7. 18.
lvi. 16.
2 2 Cor. iv. 17.
18 v. 1. 1 Tim. vi. 18. 19. Jude 21 — a 11, 12 xix. 17 Matt. xxv. 21. 23. Heb. iii. 2.
b John xii 6 xiii 2. 27

9 And I say unto you, "Make to yourselves friends * of the * mammon of unrighteousness: that, when ye fail, they may receive you * into everlasting habitations.

10 He that is a faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful

in the unrighteous † mammon, who will commit to your trust the † true riches?

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you † that which is your own?

13 No servant can serve two masters:

for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Or riches.
xl 33. xviii. 12.
Prov. xiii. 12.
19 Eph. iii. 8.
Jam. ii 5. Rev.
i. 18.
e xxv. 13-26.
1 Chr. xxix. 14.
— 15 Job ii 21.
Hab. xvi. 46-21.
Hos. ii. 8. 9.
Matt. xxv. 14
— 24.
f x. 22 Col. iii.
9. 1 Pet. i. 4. 5.
2 x. 50 xl. 23.
Jo. h xxi. 25.
Mt. x. 10. vi.
24. Rev. vi. 16
— h xiv. 25.

— 22. viii. 5-8. Jam. iv. 4 1 John ii. 15. 16. — h xiv. 25.

able "to dig," or to get this living by hard labour; and he was ashamed to beg his bread after having lived in credit and plenty. This represents the wretched state of ungodly men, when "put out of their stewardship" by death. Accordingly the steward devised a plan well suited to his purpose, and consistent with his character; determining to seduce his lord's debtors to concur in defrauding him for their own advantage. By this measure he could at his lord's expense confer an obligation on them, and making them accomplices in the fraud, they would be restrained from informing against him; and yet, if they should refuse to give him assistance in his distress, he would have them in his power; and as a desperate man who had nothing to lose, he could inform against them to the great injury of their character and property. Thus he made himself sure, that they would one after another entertain him in their houses, or provide for him some other method of subsistence. He therefore called them to him, separately, and ordered one of them to give a note of hand, as we say, for half of what he really owed, instead of one for the whole; and another with the deduction of one fifth; and so to the others. When therefore this project came to light, his lord commended the unjust steward, (not for his *iniquity*, but for his *policy*;) he could not deny but it was a well concerted plan of providing against the time of approaching distress; and in this respect alone is it proposed for our imitation: For our Lord added, that "the children of this world are wiser in their generation, than the children of light." Worldly men, who make temporal things their primary object, are more prudent in respect of their present interests, than the children of light, the people of God, are in respect of their eternal concerns. In the choice of their object they are emphatically foolish: but in the selection of means, in assiduity and perseverance, in subordinating every other concern to the favourite pursuit, and rendering every thing subservient to it: in politic contrivances to prevent disappointment, to get over untoward circumstances, and to educe advantages from them; in these and various other particulars they are exceedingly wise in their generation; yea, far wiser even than real believers, who are not so singly given up to the pursuit of their great object, nor so active, sagacious, and unremitting, in the choice and use of means, in order to the attainment of it. Much more, then, are they wiser than men in general are about their religious concerns; or than professed Christians are in improving their advantages. The Lord seems in this place to teach us, that the good things pertaining to this present life were

granted to us by God; not that we should, as proprietors spend them according to our own will; but that we should dispose of them, as intrusted to us by the Lord, in entire faithfulness. But men, especially those to whom the greatest abundance is committed, are used to abuse it in luxuriously gratifying themselves and others. Hence it comes to pass, that the Lord, no longer enduring this waste, justly determines to deprive us, as bad stewards, of our stewardship; either by taking our abused goods from us, or calling us, by terminating our lives, to his tribunal. But the proper way of averting this doom, procuring the continuance of our stewardship, and obtaining the means of greater beneficence, is to make amends to the poor, by a charitable use of them. Thus it will come to pass, that God, perceiving that we more properly use these perishing things, will count us worthy of more valuable endowments. (Beza.) The name annexed to this quotation is a sufficient pledge, that nothing, inconsistent with the doctrines of salvation by grace and justification by faith alone, was intended: but it proves, that the first reformers considered many practical instructions, and even a kind of language in inculcating them, consistent with these doctrines, which many at present would not admit of.

V. 9—13. From the preceding parable our Lord took occasion to counsel his disciples to "make to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness;" that is, of those worldly riches which men idolize, as if they worshipped a deity called *Mammon*; and in getting, keeping, or spending of which, they commit all kinds of unrighteousness. Some indeed interpret the expression, of the deceitfulness of riches, which impose upon those who expect happiness from them. The disciples of Christ, however, are directed to use riches, in "making to themselves friends;" that is, to expend them in acts of piety and charity, that many, being benefited by them, may pray for blessings on them as their benefactors. This alludes to the steward's *fauling* of his former resources, by being discharged from his place; yet *having made himself friends* by his use of his master's property, he was received into their houses. Thus when the believer shall *fail*, and be removed from his stewardship by death, they, whom he hath made his friends by charities, "will receive him into everlasting habitations." Not that this will merit that blessed recompense, or that the poor whom he hath relieved can have the disposal of it: but as the cries of the oppressed and neglected poor will testify against unfaithful stewards to their condemnation, so the prayers

1xiii. 15. xx. 47. 1s. lv. 11. Jer. 13. xiii. 10. 1s. xxi. 25-29. xxviii. 31. Matt. xxiii. 14. k. viii. 53. xxiii. 35. Ps. cxxi. 15. 16. cxix. 51. 1s. liii. 3. Jer. xx. 7. 8. Heb. xii. 35. xii. 2. 3. 1. k. 29. xi. 39. 30. xxviii. 11. 12. 21. 25. 26. 37. Prov. x. 6. Matt. vi. 2. 5. 16. xxi. 5. 25. 37. Rom. iii. 20. Jam. i. 21-25. —on 1 Sam. xvi. 7. 1 Chr. xxix. 17. 2 Chr. vi. 30. Ps. vi. 9. lxxvi. 14. cxxxix. 1. 2 Jer. xvii. 10. John ii. 25. xxi. 17. Acts. 28. xv. 8. 1 Cor. iv. 5. Rev. ii. 23. —n^gs x. j. xlix. 13. 18. Prov. xvi. 5. 1s. i. 10-14. Am. v. 21. 22. Mal. iii. 15. 1 Pet. iii. 4. v. 5. —o-29. 31. Matt. xi. 9-14. John i. 45. Acts. iii. 18. 21. 29.

14 And the Pharisees also, ¹ who were covetous, heard all these things; and they ² derided him.

15 And he said unto them, ¹ Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but ² God knoweth your hearts: ³ for that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God.

16 The ¹ law and the prophets were

until John: since that time ² the kingdom of God is preached, ³ and every man presseth into it.

17 And ¹ it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, ² than one tithe of the law to fail.

18 Whosoever ¹ putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from *her* husband, committeth adultery.

of the widows and orphans for their pious benefactors will testify for them that they were faithful stewards; and such as have died before them may be considered as standing ready to welcome them to their everlasting habitations, when they quit this world. (*Marg. Ref.*) But as the most of Christ's disciples were then, and generally are, comparatively poor, they might think themselves unconcerned in this exhortation: and therefore he assured them, that if any man were faithful in a very little, and consulted the will and honour of his Lord in the use of it, he would as certainly be accepted and rewarded, as if much had been committed to him; and the same disposition of mind would also render him faithful, if he should afterwards receive more. On the other hand, he, who was unjust in the least, spending even small sums upon his own vanity and indulgence, and thus robbing God and the poor, would as certainly be condemned, as if he had been an unfaithful steward in abusing a larger property: and the same temper of mind would render him unjust in much, if it were committed to him. And if men were unfaithful in "the ¹ unrighteous mammon, who would commit to their trust ² the true riches?" *The true riches* signifies those blessings, which ennoble and satisfy the soul for ever: faith gives the sinner a title to these riches, and grace is the earnest of them, and meetness for them; but faith and grace always render a man proportionably faithful in the unrighteous mammon. If therefore a man spend his riches upon himself, or hoard them in avarice, what evidence can he have that he is an heir of God through Christ? or what reason to expect, that God will give him that eternal felicity? The verse indeed may signify, that they who did not act faithfully, as stewards of this world's riches, were not proper persons to be made "stewards of the mysteries of ¹ God," to whom are committed the true riches, that they may by their faithfulness make many rich. If, however, any persons were unfaithful in the things intrusted to them for a time, and of which an account must be rendered, how could they expect their Lord to give them at last an inheritance, to be their own for ever, by an unalienable tenure? For what prudent man would give an estate to his steward, when he had been dishonest and unfaithful to the trust which had been reposed in him? This application of the parable our Lord closed by repeating a solemn warning, which hath already been considered. (*Notes, &c. Matt. vi. 24.*)

V. 14, 15. The Pharisees were addicted to covetousness, in proportion as they were exempt from licentiousness. They were greedy of gain, and often got it by

extortion and injustice; and they either spent it in self-indulgence, or hoarded it for themselves. When therefore they heard our Lord discourse in this manner on the use of riches, they treated his instructions with the utmost derision and contempt; *sneering* at him, ¹ as a visionary, who did not understand human life, or only appeared to despise the world, because, (as they supposed,) it was out ² of his reach, (*Doddridge.*) But he calmly replied to their disdain, that they indeed justified themselves by various plausible pretences, and preserved a fair appearance before men; but ³ "God knew their hearts," which were full of hypocrisy, pride, and wickedness: and though their forms, austerities, superstitions, and traditions, were "highly esteemed among men," as if they were of great excellency, yet they were an abomination in the sight of God. This is also the case with a variety of endowments, dispositions, and achievements, which men *highly esteem*, but which God *abhors*; such, for instance, is the thirst for glory, the ambition of conquest, the desire of revenge, called a quick sense of honour, the disposition to grasp after riches as the grand object, if not attended with gross injustice or excessive penuriousness; and a lavish generosity, though not directed to any valuable purpose. In these, and in innumerable other instances, God *abhors* what man highly esteems.

V. 16-18: (*Notes, &c. Matt. v. 31, 32. xi. 12, 13. xix. 3-9. Mark x. 11, 12.*) The Pharisees were very zealous for the ceremonial law, as well as for their own traditions; and they opposed Christ, supposing that his doctrine was contrary to it: but he intimated to them, that a more spiritual dispensation was about to be introduced. The law, and the prophets who explained and enforced the law, continued in full force, till John the fore-runner of the Messiah began his ministry: since that time the kingdom of God had been preached; and though the Pharisees opposed it, yet numbers were earnestly pressing into it, and breaking their way through every obstruction, that they might share its invaluable privileges. They ought not, however, to suppose, that this new dispensation would interfere with the law of Moses; for it would be easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tithe of that law to fail of answering its intended purpose. (*Notes, &c. Matt. v. 17-20.*) The ceremonial law would not fail of being accomplished in that great Antitype which it prefigured; the moral law would be magnified by his obedience unto death, and established in its full authority by his religion, as well as vindicated from corrupt interpretations. But what they contended for as *the law* was

o xii. 16—21.
xvii. 24, 25.
Jan. 7. 1—5.
P. x. xxi. 15. Job
xii. 11—15. Ps.
lxxiii. 3—7. Ev.
xv. 1. 2. And vi.
4—6 Rev. xvi.
4. xvii. 7. 16.
y. Jude. vii. 26.
Josh. vii. 15.
Ez. xvi. 13.
xvi. 17. Mark
xv. 17, 20.
2. xvi. 35. 43.
1 Sam. ii. 8.
Jan. 1. 9. 11. 5.
a. John. xi. 1.
b. Acts. iii. 2.
c. xli. John. 7. 8.
P. x. xxiv. 19.
lxxiii. 14. Is. i.
6. Jer. viii. 22.
d. 1 Cor. iv. 11.
2 Cor. xii. 27.—e. Matt. xv. 27. Mark vii. 28. John vi. 12.—f. Job iii. 13.—19. Is.
lviii. 1, 2. Rev. xiv. 13.—g. Ps. cxi. 11, 12. Matt. xlii. 38—43. xxiv. 31. Heb. ii. 14.

19 ¶ There was a certain ^a rich man, which was ^a clothed in ^v purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day : 20 And there was ^a certain beggar named ^a Lazarus, which ^b was laid at his gate, ^c full of sores,

21 And ^d desiring to be fed with ^e the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table : moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 And it came to pass, ^f that the beggar died, and ^g was carried by the

angels into ^h Abraham's bosom : ⁱ the rich man also died, ^j and was buried ;

23 And ^k in hell he lifted up his eyes, being ^m in torments, and ⁿ seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24 And he cried, and said, ^o Father Abraham, ^p have mercy on me ; and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger ^q in water, ^r and cool my tongue ; ^s for I am tormented in this flame.

h. Matt. vii. 11.
John. xiii. 23.
xvi. 20.
lxxi. 20. Job xxi.
13. 20—23. Ps.
xlii. 6—12. 16.
—19. lxxiii. 18.
—20. lxxv. xiv.
—23. Mark viii.
54, 57. Jam. i. 11.
1. 1. Pet. ii. 24.
2. 2 Kings. ix. 24.
35. Ec. viii. 10.
16. xiv. 16. xxii.
16.
1. Ps. ix. 17. xvi.
10. xlix. 15.
lxxviii. 13. Prov.
v. 5. x. 27. 16.
xv. 24. Is.
xiv. 9. 15. Matt. v. 22. 23. xviii. 33. 1 Cor. xv. 55. *Marg.* 2. Pet. ii. 4. Rev. xx. 13. 14.
m. 28. viii. 28. Matt. vii. 29. Rev. xiv. 10, 11. xx. 1. 10. 11. 12. n. xlii. 29. Matt. vii. 12.
o. 30. 11. 9. John. vii. 39—53—56. Rom. iv. 12. ix. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

in fact a perversion of it. This our Lord showed in one instance which had been before considered ; for in this matter the real meaning of the *moral* law was contrary to the doctrine which they grounded on a misrepresentation of a *judicial* regulation, a *permission* for the hardness of their hearts. So that whilst they imposed on the people by a pretended zeal about the law ; they were, in fact, supplanting its authority and perverting its meaning by their traditions. This seems to be the connexion of this passage.

V. 19—21. Our Lord here illustrates more fully the guilt and madness of men's wasting riches upon their lusts, by a parable, or description, which is interesting and affecting in the highest degree : a *parable* indeed it must be, as to many of its circumstances ; yet in its grand outlines it is doubtless continually verified. The *rich man* here described is not charged with having acquired his wealth by iniquity : and though he was clothed in the most costly attire, and lived in splendour, luxury, and jovial mirth every day, it is not said, that he ruined his family, or defrauded his creditors. Nor is he accused of being an adulterer, a drunkard, or a blasphemer. He is represented as a Jew, ^a of the stock of Abraham, and therefore may be conceived to have had "a form of godliness ;" and he was so far from being a miser, that he kept a noble house and an elegant table, and entertained his guests in a most hospitable manner. But he was an *unfaithful steward*, who *wasted his Lord's goods*, neither using them to his glory, nor to the real advantage of mankind. However honourable he might therefore be in the world's estimation, (15.) he was not deemed worthy of a name in the word of God ; while that honour was conferred on the poor beggar that lay at his gate, who was called *Lazarus*, which some explain to mean *Helpless*, and others *God my helper* ; and in either construction it suited both his case and his character. He was without help among men, but he trusted in God, and he was his Helper. This man, having no power to labour, was supported by begging. "He could not dig, but to beg he was not ashamed ;" and he was laid at the rich man's gate, that he might move his compassion. He was not only destitute, but covered with grievous ulcers ; and he desired and craved to be fed with the crumbs, or the most refuse broken victuals, which fell from the rich man's table, such as were either thrown away or eaten by the dogs. And though it is not said that none were given him, yet it is strongly implied, that his

hunger was not satisfied. At the same time he had no surgeon to dress, or ointment to mollify, or even garments to cover, his sores ; so that "the dogs came and licked" them, as more compassionate than their master, who kept them for his pleasure or pride, rather than that he would feed a poor starving fellow-creature.

V. 22, 23. The beggar was soon delivered from his sufferings by the friendly stroke of death, and as his body had not been the great object of his care, so no account is given how it was disposed of : the survivors for their own sakes would put it somewhere out of the way, where it would sleep till the resurrection. But angels, who are all "ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation," waited round him in his dying hours, and when he resigned his spirit, they conveyed it into *Abraham's bosom*. The joys of heaven are here represented as a feast ; Abraham the father of the faithful is placed, as it were, at the head of the table : so that Abraham's bosom denotes a place in heaven near to that distinguished patriarch, and intimates that the beggar was an eminent believer, a saint of superior excellency. About the same time the rich man also died, for death is no respecter of persons ; and as he had indulged and decorated his body to the neglect of his soul, so he had a funeral suited to his rank. According to modern customs, in that *silliest of all vanities*, we may imagine his poor lifeless clay lying in state, surrounded with all the appendages of nobility ; and then, after a proper time for the display of this ostentation, conveyed with a pompous procession to a magnificent tomb, with great ceremony and distinction. We may suppose that some venal orator would deliver a fulsome panegyric on his noble birth, honourable titles and achievements, distinguished virtues, and princely generosity ; and at length that the sepulchre would be adorned with some inscription replete with adulation. But all this time his soul, all of him that could feel or reflect, was in hell, in the place of separate spirits, condemned to torment and misery. In this dreadful state he lifted up his eyes, which before he had shut against the truth of his case and character, and discovered his own misery when it was become too late to escape it. Among other objects he is represented as seeing Abraham afar off, and poor despised Lazarus reclining on his bosom, enjoying the most perfect rest and most exquisite satisfactions : and this view of Lazarus's felicity, joined to the sad reverse which himself had experienced, must add to his inward anguish and torture.

21. Lam. i. 7.
 22. 23.
 24. Mark. ix. 46.
 25. Job. xxi. 17.
 26. xxv. 14.
 27. xxviii. 35.
 28. 17. 18. 19.
 29. 12. 20. 21.
 30. Phil. iii. 17.
 31. John. i. 15, 16.
 32. John. xvi. 21.
 33. Acts. xiv. 22.
 34. 1 Thes. ii. 4, 1.
 35. 1 Thes. xi. 25, 26.
 36. Rev. vi. 14.

25 But Abraham said, "Son," remember that thou in thy life-time receivest ^a *thy good things*, and likewise Lazarus *evil things*: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

26 And ^b besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence.

27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

V. 24—26. We need not determine whether condemned spirits know or see what takes place in the realms of bliss: the representation is intended to show the hopeless misery to which they are reduced. The Jews were prone to confide in their relation to Abraham, though not partakers of his faith: but when the rich man in hell claimed him for his father, Abraham did not deny the relation, yet he showed him no compassion. He despaired of mercy from God, yet cried to Abraham to have mercy on him; as if he had been more merciful than his Maker, and was either able or willing to help the irreconcilable enemies of God! This is the only scriptural instance of a prayer offered to a departed saint, and it gives small encouragement to that prevalent species of idolatry. The wretched supplicant did not expect that Abraham could help him out of that place of torment, or give him any durable relief in it; but he desired that "Lazarus might dip the tip of his finger in water to cool his tongue." A man scorched by intense heat, and parched with exquisite thirst, might crave such a small and momentary alleviation: thus this poor condemned sinner sought a transient abatement of his exquisite misery, being all that he could hope for. His request was the language of despair, and made way for it. His desire that Lazarus might be sent, may either intimate that he retained his haughty spirit in his deepest misery; or else it implied a conviction that Lazarus had been a benevolent man, who wished him well, and was glad to do any one a service when he had it in his power. Some have thought that the particular mention made of the tongue might intimate, that as this member is peculiarly instrumental in promoting wickedness and impiety, so his sufferings were greatly enhanced by the sins which he had committed by his profane and profligate discourse. Abraham, however, answered him in such a manner, as put an end to his feeble hopes. He allowed that he was his son according to the flesh; but then he should "remember that he had received *his good things*." Riches, sensual pleasures, and the pride of life, were the *good things* that he had chosen, in preference to the favour and image of God and heavenly happiness. In this he had been gratified; he had in his life-time received and spent his portion, and he must not expect more good. In like manner Lazarus had received, and endured his evil things; he had feared sin and the wrath of God more than pain, poverty, or contempt; he had chosen sanctified affliction rather than unsanctified prosperity; he had endured his

28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, ^a lest they also come into this ^b place of torment.

29 Abraham saith unto him, ^b They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will ^c repent.

31 And he said unto him, ^d If they hear not Moses and the prophets, ^e neither will they ^f be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

21. 1. Sem. xxi. 29.
 22. 1. Mal. iii. 1.
 23. 1. 2. Thes. i. 11.
 24. 1. 2. Tim. i. 11.
 25. 1. 2. Tim. i. 11.
 26. 1. 2. Tim. i. 11.
 27. 1. 2. Tim. i. 11.
 28. 1. 2. Tim. i. 11.
 29. 1. 2. Tim. i. 11.
 30. 1. 2. Tim. i. 11.
 31. 1. 2. Tim. i. 11.
 32. 1. 2. Tim. i. 11.
 33. 1. 2. Tim. i. 11.
 34. 1. 2. Tim. i. 11.
 35. 1. 2. Tim. i. 11.
 36. 1. 2. Tim. i. 11.

afflictions patiently, and profited by them; and they were now terminated, and he was comforted in heavenly felicity, whilst the rich man was tormented in the flames of hell. This doom was not awarded, because he had possessed worldly riches; for Abraham had been rich; but for idolizing and abusing riches, instead of using them as a steward, and seeking God himself for his Portion. To complete the horror of this answer, he further assured him, that there was a *great chasm* fixed between the places of happiness and misery; so that if an inhabitant of heaven desired to go to relieve one that was in the place of torment, it would be impracticable; even as it would be for the condemned sinners to leave their prison, and enter the realms of happiness: so that both of them were finally and eternally fixed in their respective states, by the unchangeable decrees of God. Many in different ages have endeavoured, as it were, to fill up or make a bridge over *this great gulph*, and vast multitudes have wished them success in the enterprise, as this is their only hope of escaping the rich man's doom: but it is as vain, as was his expectation of a drop of water from Lazarus.

V. 27—31. Abraham's answer put a final period to the rich man's forlorn hope; yet he still claimed Abraham as his father, and supposed, that, though he could not *mitigate* his torture, he might prevent the *increase* of it: and as he knew there was a passage open between heaven and earth, though none between heaven and hell, he desired Lazarus might be sent to his father's house, (supposing that he would gladly go on so benevolent an errand,) for he had five brethren, who were living in the same luxury and magnificence as he had done, and were in the way to the same place of torment. They are represented as indulging themselves on earth, while he was in a place of torment. This fully proves the separate state; unless any man can think that our Lord would decorate a parable, in a manner suited to mislead the upright inquirer. The poor despairing wretch therefore entreated that Lazarus should go, and testify to them concerning the awful realities of the invisible world, and so excite them to repentance, that they might escape the wrath to come. It is intimated in this representation, that the rich man died young; for nothing is said of a family left behind him; and his brethren are supposed to be living together in their father's house as joint heirs of his estate. We cannot imagine that there is any *charity*, or even *natural affection*, in hell: we must therefore either consider this as a mere

CHAPTER XVII.

Jesus teaches his disciples, to avoid giving offences, 1, 2 : and to forgive one another,

circumstance intended to introduce the subsequent instructions ; or else we must conclude that they, whose example, discourse, or seductions, have led others into infidelity, impiety, and profligacy, will be rendered more miserable hereafter by the upbraidings of those whose souls they have murdered ; they would, therefore, most willingly prevent their destruction for fear of an addition to their own intolerable misery. Many admired writers would *now* be willing to publish recantations of their skeptical, heretical, or licentious works ; many actors would wish to come upon the stage again, to act a different part from those, by which they inflamed the passions, and corrupted the principles and morals of mankind ; and many false teachers, to stand up for a more orthodox creed than they once propagated. For men will be accountable for all the effects of their conduct, however widely they may spread, or durably they may last ; even as he who wickedly sets fire to a house, is answerable for the burning of a city, if the conflagration should extend so far. In answer to this request Abraham observed, that " they had Moses and the prophets," whom they might hear and attend to. In their writings, the future state, the day of judgment, and the way of salvation, were declared, and men were warned, exhorted, and invited, as much as was necessary : so that if they would not hear them, their destruction would be of themselves alone. To this the other replied, that surely they would regard one who went to them from the dead, and be induced to repentance ; as the terror of his appearance, and the awfulness of his warnings, especially coming from a person whom they had known in his life-time, would produce a salutary effect upon them : but Abraham closed the conversation, by declaring that even this would not *persuade* them. They might be amazed, affrighted, and restrained, by an apparition ; but they would not be influenced to renounce sin and the world, to mortify their lusts, to humble themselves before God, to trust his mercy, and devote themselves to his service. Such external demonstrations and alarms would not change their hearts, without which there could be no true repentance, and they had sufficient means of conviction and instruction, if disposed to attend to them. It is observable that many of those who witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus, did not believe in Christ by means of that stupendous miracle : the Roman soldiers, who saw many circumstances of our Lord's resurrection, immediately after agreed for hire to propagate the most notorious falsehood ; and the Jews persisted in their impenitence, amidst the multiplied demonstrations of that same event ! And indeed there are circumstances occurring in every age, which sufficiently evince that no terrors, arguments, or convictions, can effect true repentance, without the special grace of God renewing the sinner's heart.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—12.



It is indisputable that the wealthiest of men are only
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3, 4. *He shows the power of faith, 5, 6 ; and that man's best obedience has no merit with God, 7—10. He cleanses ten lepers ; of whom one only, and he a*

stewards to the great Lord of all ; yet, alas ! few duly consider this ; and numbers are continually " accused to him " of having wasted his goods." The Lord is also frequently calling to them in his providence and by his word, and inquiring, " How is it that I hear such things of " you " ? and reminding them, that ere long " they must " give account of their stewardship, and be no longer " stewards." If no suitable preparation be made for that solemn event, the consequences will be awful beyond conception : we should therefore *now* seriously inquire what we should do, that, when put out of our stewardship, we may be received into a better habitation ? The Lord himself hath shown us what we should do : and though we need the *prudent foresight*, yet we have no occasion for the *carnal policy*, of the unjust steward ; for the way of acceptance and of duty are plainly marked out for us. Indeed, many seem to say, " I cannot dig, and to beg I am " ashamed ; " they cannot enter heaven by obeying the law, and are too proud to ask it " as the gift of God through " Jesus Christ." Nay, they are equally indisposed to " labour for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life," or to seek the blessing by fervent prayer. But the believer, though he knows that he can do nothing of himself, will yet " work out his salvation with fear and trembling ; " depending on God " to work in him to will and do, of " his good pleasure : " and he evidences his faith in Christ by love to his brethren. Instead of " wasting his Lord's " goods," he will " make himself friends with the many " men of unrighteousness," that he may know that everlasting mansions are prepared for him, when flesh and heart shall fail. But, alas ! in this, as well as in many other instances, " the children of this world are wiser in their " generation than the children of light : " and though the security and advantage to a man's present comfort, to his family, and in respect of eternity, of communicating gladly and largely to the relief of the necessitous, be demonstrable, yet how scantily do most professed Christians " lend to the Lord," in comparison of the sums wasted in needless embellishments and indulgence ! It would be well, if the children of light would, on scriptural principles, learn wisdom from the men of the world ; and, having chosen their object, would pursue it as singly and constantly, as they do their worthless interests. In this case, what a privilege would wealth be ! How much good might be done ! How much honour would redound to the Gospel ! How many thanksgivings would be rendered to the Lord ! And how many prayers by those whose souls and bodies were benefited, for the felicity of their benefactors ! (Note, 2 Cor. ix. 6—15.) And with what satisfaction might the faithful steward expect the hour of dissolution, or the coming of his Lord, and anticipate the joy of being then welcomed by such friends to the regions of perfect felicity ! Nor should those in narrower circumstances forget, that they too are the Lord's stewards. Something we all might spare, that is now wasted, with which to evince our faithfulness in a little : and this would equally

Samaritan, returns to give thanks to God, 11—19. The spiritual nature of the kingdom of God, 20—22. The

manner in which it would be established, with the ruin of all who neglected it, 23—37.

ensure our gracious recompense, as the larger liberalities of our more wealthy brethren. If men spend their little upon themselves, they will surely be condemned, when turned out of their stewardship. But there are other things besides the unrighteous mammon, in which they may prove themselves faithful or unfaithful. Some may say, "silver and gold I have none;" yet, being intrusted with a stewardship of the true riches, they may, in deep poverty, be more useful than those who are intrusted with great worldly riches; and need not envy their advantageous situation. But surely they are unfit to be intrusted with the true riches, who are unfaithful in the unrighteous mammon. Even as they who expect God to give them the eternal inheritance, though they waste and abuse the talents committed to their stewardship, are undeniably indulging a vain and presumptuous confidence.

V. 13—18.

In vain do men pretend to serve two masters, or to worship God and Mammon: if the Lord be God, let us decidedly serve him, and devote all we have to his glory. When ministers, who have the honour to resemble their Lord in poverty, discourse on such topics, the covetous, whether Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, or Herodians, will be sure to deride them as visionaries. But they little think how entirely the servant of God disregards their contempt and ridicule, and pities their ungodly prosperity. Some of this character are zealous professors of evangelical truth: and if ministers preach against covetousness, or reprove them for it, or exhort them to liberality, they will justify themselves by a variety of excuses, and call their selfishness by soft names, and so make the matter out *before men* as well as they can: but God knoweth the wickedness of their hearts; and to him it must be left, when we have reminded them, that "those things, which are highly esteemed among men, are abomination in the sight of God." Such characters are commonly the bitterest enemies to the power of godliness: and whilst those, who know the worth and the danger of their souls, are pressing through difficulties and temptations into the kingdom of God, they are carping at the doctrine or exhortations of faithful ministers, and explaining away those Scriptures which run counter to their sins, making void the law of God by their own notions or traditions, and attempting to prejudice better disposed persons against the truth.

V. 19—26.

It is most astonishing, that any man can read this chapter, and profess to believe it to be the word of God, and yet spend his life in those very courses, of which the consequences are so awfully and expressly declared! Yet what numbers are there in our prosperous cities of these "rich men, who are clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day!" and how many more would there be, if men could attain the objects of their wishes!

The most of those, who do not resemble the rich sinner here described, are either restrained by penurious avarice, or by murmuring, envying, and grudging poverty. Multitudes go to the utmost limits of their ability, nay, beyond what they can afford, and then fret continually to see themselves out-done by their more prosperous neighbours! What person of common sense would deliberately prefer the rich man's lot, in life, death, and eternity, to that of Lazarus? yet who almost prefers "suffering affliction with the people of God to the enjoyment of the pleasures of sin for a season?" Alas! most men endeavour to forget or disbelieve such declarations, that they may not be disturbed by painful reflections in their pursuit of worldly gratifications: so that they refuse to lift up their eyes, till they drop into hell; and then they curse and bewail their own madness and folly, and envy the condition of the meanest beggar, whom here they scorned, loathed, and neglected? But it is vain for him, who hath no mercy on the poor, to expect mercy from God: and even if his luxury and splendour be not supported by rapine, oppression, and murder, yet, "if any man have this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him," he has no right to call himself the disciple of the blessed Jesus. Let no man therefore deceive himself by vain words. He that said, "heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away," hath here stated to us, that when any one dies, his soul immediately is received into heavenly felicity, or cast into the fire of hell; that whilst the bodies of rich sinners are entombed with vain ostentation, "they lift up their eyes in hell, being in torment;" that neither God, nor saints, nor angels, will show them any more mercy; that even pious parents, who have prayed for and wept over their children here, will hereafter approve of their final condemnation; that not the least mitigation of their misery can be obtained, "not a drop of water to cool the burning tongue of those tormented in that flame" can be procured, by all their cries and enreaties; that with the dying sinner's breath all his hopes expire, and an end is put to all "his good things;" and that "a great gulph is fixed," and all escape is rendered for ever impossible. Plausible objections, or flat contradictions of these truths, may be advanced; and they, "who speak according to the oracles of God," will be ridiculed and reviled, as melancholy or malevolent men: for numbers feel it *their interest*, (according to the tenour of their present conduct,) that any scheme should be true, rather than that of revelation: but when one after another dies, and lifts up his eyes in hell, he will awfully find whose words have been accomplished; the Lord's, or those of such as dared to contradict him. Instead therefore of presumptuously speculating on the brink of this tremendous precipice, (like him who lost his life by attempting to discover the source of the flames of mount Etna,) let us copy the example of those, who fled from the gaping earth, "lest it should swallow them up also!" (Num. xvi. 34.) If there were only a peradventure of

THEN said he unto the disciples, ^a It is impossible but that offences will come; but woe unto him, through whom they come!

^b It were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

^c Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

^d ^e ^f ^g ^h ⁱ ^j ^k ^l ^m ⁿ ^o ^p ^q ^r ^s ^t ^u ^v ^w ^x ^y ^z ^{aa} ^{ab} ^{ac} ^{ad} ^{ae} ^{af} ^{ag} ^{ah} ^{ai} ^{aj} ^{ak} ^{al} ^{am} ^{an} ^{ao} ^{ap} ^{aq} ^{ar} ^{as} ^{at} ^{au} ^{av} ^{aw} ^{ax} ^{ay} ^{az} ^{ba} ^{bb} ^{bc} ^{bd} ^{be} ^{bf} ^{bg} ^{bh} ^{bi} ^{bj} ^{bk} ^{bl} ^{bm} ^{bn} ^{bo} ^{bp} ^{bq} ^{br} ^{bs} ^{bt} ^{bu} ^{bv} ^{bw} ^{bx} ^{by} ^{bz} ^{ca} ^{cb} ^{cc} ^{cd} ^{ce} ^{cf} ^{cg} ^{ch} ^{ci} ^{cj} ^{ck} ^{cl} ^{cm} ^{cn} ^{co} ^{cp} ^{cq} ^{cr} ^{cs} ^{ct} ^{cu} ^{cv} ^{cw} ^{cx} ^{cy} ^{cz} ^{da} ^{db} ^{dc} ^{dd} ^{de} ^{df} ^{dg} ^{dh} ^{di} ^{dj} ^{dk} ^{dl} ^{dm} ^{dn} ^{do} ^{dp} ^{dq} ^{dr} ^{ds} ^{dt} ^{du} ^{dv} ^{dw} ^{dx} ^{dy} ^{dz} ^{ea} ^{eb} ^{ec} ^{ed} ^{ee} ^{ef} ^{eg} ^{eh} ^{ei} ^{ej} ^{ek} ^{el} ^{em} ^{en} ^{eo} ^{ep} ^{eq} ^{er} ^{es} ^{et} ^{eu} ^{ev} ^{ew} ^{ex} ^{ey} ^{ez} ^{fa} ^{fb} ^{fc} ^{fd} ^{fe} ^{ff} ^{fg} ^{fh} ^{fi} ^{fj} ^{fk} ^{fl} ^{fm} ^{fn} ^{fo} ^{fp} ^{fq} ^{fr} ^{fs} ^{ft} ^{fu} ^{fv} ^{fw} ^{fx} ^{fy} ^{fz} ^{ga} ^{gb} ^{gc} ^{gd} ^{ge} ^{gf} ^{gg} ^{gh} ^{gi} ^{gj} ^{gk} ^{gl} ^{gm} ^{gn} ^{go} ^{gp} ^{gq} ^{gr} ^{gs} ^{gt} ^{gu} ^{gv} ^{gw} ^{gx} ^{gy} ^{gz} ^{ha} ^{hb} ^{hc} ^{hd} ^{he} ^{hf} ^{hg} ^{hh} ^{hi} ^{hj} ^{hk} ^{hl} ^{hm} ^{hn} ^{ho} ^{hp} ^{hq} ^{hr} ^{hs} ^{ht} ^{hu} ^{hv} ^{hw} ^{hx} ^{hy} ^{hz} ^{ia} ^{ib} ^{ic} ^{id} ^{ie} ^{if} ^{ig} ^{ih} ⁱⁱ ^{ij} ^{ik} ^{il} ^{im} ⁱⁿ ^{io} ^{ip} ^{iq} ^{ir} ^{is} ^{it} ^{iu} ^{iv} ^{iw} ^{ix} ^{iy} ^{iz} ^{ja} ^{jb} ^{jc} ^{jd} ^{je} ^{jf} ^{jh} ^{ji} ^{jj} ^{jk} ^{jl} ^{jm} ^{jn} ^{jo} ^{jp} ^{jq} ^{jr} ^{js} ^{jt} ^{ju} ^{jv} ^{jw} ^{jx} ^{ky} ^{kz} ^{la} ^{lb} ^{lc} ^{ld} ^{le} ^{lf} ^{lg} ^{lh} ^{li} ^{lj} ^{lk} ^{ll} ^{lm} ^{ln} ^{lo} ^{lp} ^{lq} ^{lr} ^{ls} ^{lt} ^{lu} ^{lv} ^{lw} ^{lx} ^{ly} ^{lz} ^{ma} ^{mb} ^{mc} ^{md} ^{me} ^{mf} ^{mg} ^{mh} ^{mi} ^{mj} ^{mk} ^{ml} ^{mm} ^{mn} ^{mo} ^{mp} ^{mq} ^{mr} ^{ms} ^{mt} ^{mu} ^{mv} ^{mw} ^{mx} ^{my} ^{mz} ^{na} ^{nb} ^{nc} nd ^{ne} ^{nf} ^{ng} ^{nh} ⁿⁱ ^{nj} ^{nk} ^{nl} ^{nm} ⁿⁿ ^{no} ^{np} ^{nq} ^{nr} ^{ns} ^{nt} ^{nu} ^{nv} ^{nw} ^{nx} ^{ny} ^{nz} ^{oa} ^{ob} ^{oc} ^{od} ^{oe} ^{of} ^{og} ^{oh} ^{oi} ^{oj} ^{ok} ^{ol} ^{om} ^{on} ^{oo} ^{op} ^{oq} ^{or} ^{os} ^{ot} ^{ou} ^{ov} ^{ow} ^{ox} ^{oy} ^{oz} ^{pa} ^{pb} ^{pc} ^{pd} ^{pe} ^{pf} ^{pg} ^{ph} ^{pi} ^{pj} ^{pk} ^{pl} ^{pm} ^{pn} ^{po} ^{pp} ^{pq} ^{pr} ^{ps} ^{pt} ^{pu} ^{pv} ^{pw} ^{px} ^{py} ^{pz} ^{qa} ^{qb} ^{qc} ^{qd} ^{qe} ^{qf} ^{qg} ^{qh} ^{qi} ^{qj} ^{qk} ^{ql} ^{qm} ^{qn} ^{qo} ^{qp} ^{qq} ^{qr} ^{qs} ^{qt} ^{qu} ^{qv} ^{qw} ^{qx} ^{qy} ^{qz} ^{ra} ^{rb} ^{rc} rd ^{re} ^{rf} ^{rg} ^{rh} ^{ri} ^{rj} ^{rk} ^{rl} ^{rm} ^{rn} ^{ro} ^{rp} ^{rq} ^{rr} ^{rs} ^{rt} ^{ru} ^{rv} ^{rw} ^{rx} ^{ry} ^{rz} ^{sa} ^{sb} ^{sc} ^{sd} ^{se} ^{sf} ^{sg} ^{sh} ^{si} ^{sj} ^{sk} ^{sl} sm ^{sn} ^{so} ^{sp} ^{sq} ^{sr} ^{ss} st ^{su} ^{sv} ^{sw} ^{sx} ^{sy} ^{sz} ^{ta} ^{tb} ^{tc} ^{td} ^{te} ^{tf} ^{tg} th ^{ti} ^{tj} ^{tk} ^{tl} tm ^{tn} ^{to} ^{tp} ^{tr} ^{ts} ^{tt} ^{tu} ^{tv} ^{tw} ^{tx} ^{ty} ^{tz} ^{ua} ^{ub} ^{uc} ^{ud} ^{ue} ^{uf} ^{ug} ^{uh} ^{ui} ^{uj} ^{uk} ^{ul} ^{um} ^{un} ^{uo} ^{up} ^{uq} ^{ur} ^{us} ^{ut} ^{uu} ^{uv} ^{uw} ^{ux} ^{uy} ^{uz} ^{va} ^{vb} ^{vc} ^{vd} ^{ve} ^{vf} ^{vg} ^{vh} ^{vi} ^{vj} ^{vk} ^{vl} ^{vm} ^{vn} ^{vo} ^{vp} ^{vq} ^{vr} ^{vs} ^{vt} ^{vu} ^{vv} ^{vw} ^{vx} ^{vy} ^{vz} ^{wa} ^{wb} ^{wc} ^{wd} ^{we} ^{wf} ^{wg} ^{wh} ^{wi} ^{wj} ^{wk} ^{wl} ^{wm} ^{wn} ^{wo} ^{wp} ^{wq} ^{wr} ^{ws} ^{wt} ^{wu} ^{wv} ^{ww} ^{wx} ^{wy} ^{wz} ^{xa} ^{xb} ^{xc} ^{xd} ^{xe} ^{xf} ^{fg} ^{xh} ^{xi} ^{xj} ^{xk} ^{xl} ^{xm} ^{xn} ^{xo} ^{xp} ^{xq} ^{xr} ^{xs} ^{xt} ^{xu} ^{xv} ^{xw} ^{xx} ^{xy} ^{xz} ^{ya} ^{yb} ^{yc} ^{yd} ^{ye} ^{yf} ^{yg} ^{yh} ^{yi} ^{yj} ^{yk} ^{yl} ^{ym} ^{yn} ^{yo} ^{yp} ^{yq} ^{yr} ^{ys} ^{yt} ^{yu} ^{yv} ^{yw} ^{yx} ^{yy} ^{yz} ^{za} ^{zb} ^{zc} ^{zd} ^{ze} ^{zf} ^{zg} ^{zh} ^{zi} ^{zj} ^{zk} ^{zl} ^{zm} ^{zn} ^{zo} ^{zp} ^{zq} ^{zr} ^{zs} ^{zt} ^{zu} ^{zv} ^{zw} ^{zx} ^{zy} ^{zz}

4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

6 And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye might say unto this sycamine-tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

sinking from ungodly self-indulgence into everlasting misery, or of obtaining eternal life by any possible self-denial; a wise man would surely relinquish, (if needful) the greatest affluence, submit to abject penury, embrace a dunghill, and endure severer miseries than those of Lazarus, without a murmur or hesitation. But the matter is as certain as the word of God, who cannot lie; and the rich are not, in common cases, required to leave their estates, or to forego any real comfort of them: nay, the temperance and moderation commanded them tend to increase the measure of their actual enjoyment; whilst the liberal distribution to which they are exhorted leads to additional pleasures, almost as much superior to the epicure's gratifications, as the felicity of an angel exceeds that of the lowest animal. But should the Lord call us to endure poverty, pain, and sickness, he will not leave us comfortless. It is possible that a believer "may be laid at a rich man's gate full of sores, and desire, in vain, to be fed "with the crumbs from his table;" but it is not possible that he should be deprived of the mercy of his heavenly Father. He may be unattended, in pain and sickness, by physicians, friends, or servants; but angels will minister to him, and watch around his dying bed, and the Spirit of God will communicate effectual consolations. And should want or neglect, (which rarely happens,) shorten his life, he will only be the sooner removed from "his evil things," and introduced to the enjoyment of complete felicity: so that in every possible case, they, and they only, "are blessed, who have the Lord for their God."

V. 27—31.

It is vain for men to imagine that other evidence, or means of instruction, would induce them to repentance, whilst they neglect "the word of God." They, who have perished in sin, could indeed come, and tell such a tale of woe, as would harrow up the soul with horror, or drive men to distraction; and probably they would, if at liberty, try in this way to prevent their own increasing misery. The souls also of departed saints could relate astonishing things of their own blessedness, and of the misery of the damned; and sinners on earth, or in hell, may fancy that this would bring men to repentance. But the testimony of the Lord is more sure, and giveth wisdom to the simple, and is the best means of converting souls. Though the witness of saints or angels is great, the witness of God is greater; the same things are testified to in God's word,

which would be told us by "one that should come from the dead;" he that rejects this testimony makes God a liar, and further proof would be improper: an apparition might produce a greater temporary alarm, but it would not afford so solid and permanent a ground of conviction: and therefore, if men "believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Instead therefore of indulging unwarranted speculations, let every one take heed to the sure word of Scripture, and pray to God for that new heart and humble spirit, without which all means must prove ineffectual: and let us conclude, by seriously inquiring "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII. V. 1, 2. (Notes, Matt. xviii. 1—14.) V. 3, 4. This contains a strong and important intimation, how much sin and scandal is occasioned by a severe quarrelsome temper in the disciples of Christ: as it not only stirs up the corruptions of those with whom they contend, but leads others to think meanly of a profession, which has so little efficacy to soften and sweeten the temper of those who maintain it. (Dodridge.) (Notes, Matt. xviii. 15—35.) We should forgive those who do not repent, so as to pray for them, and to wait for an opportunity of doing them good; but our friendly intercourse with such as have been evidently injurious, and obstinately persist in it, must be in some measure interrupted.

V. 5, 6. (Note, &c. Matt. xvii. 20, 21.) The apostles perceived the excellency and the difficulty of the conduct prescribed to them: and that faith in the divine mercy and grace was the principle from which it must proceed; they therefore besought Jesus to "increase their faith." This implied a full persuasion that he was able to remove those impediments to the vigorous exercise of faith, which they could not. (Note, Mark ix. 24.) True faith is "of the operation of God;" nor can it be conceived possible for one mere man, or creature, so to influence the mind of another, by any direct act of power as to produce faith where it did not before exist, or to increase it, when weak and wavering. According therefore to the system of Arians and Socinians, our Lord might have reproved the disciples for attributing too much to him: but, on the contrary, his answer evidently implied an approbation of their petition; and was a further recom-

† xlii 15 xiv 5.
Mou xii 11

7 But ^m which of you, having a servant plowing, or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

8 And will not rather say unto him, ^o Make ready wherewith I may sup, ^o and grid thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

10 So likewise ye, ^p when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

11 ¶ And it came to pass, ^q as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, ^r which stood afar off:

13 And they lifted up *their* voices, and said, Jesus, Master, ^s have mercy on us.

14 And when he saw *them*, he said unto them, ^t Go shew yourselves unto the

priests. And it came to pass, that ^u as they went, they were cleansed.

15 And ^v one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God;

16 And ^w fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: ^x and he was a Samaritan.

17 And Jesus answering, said, Were there not ten cleansed? ^y but where are the nine?

18 There are not found that returned ^z to give glory to God, ^a save this stranger.

19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way; ^b thy faith hath made thee whole.

20 ¶ And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, ^c when the kingdom of God should come; he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with ^d observation.

21 Neither shall they say, ^e Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, ^f the kingdom of God is ^g within you.

22 And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, ^h when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.

John vii 35-viii 21-21 xii 35 xiii 30 xvi 5-7, 16-22 xviii 11-19.

mentation to them of that powerful principle, to which "all things are possible." The idea of a tree being planted, taking root, and growing in the unstable ocean, is a most emphatical figure to represent to us, that by faith "we may do all things, through Christ who strengtheneth us."

V. 7—10. The connexion between vigorous faith, with its practical effects, and deep humility, is here pointed out. A man who possessed and maintained a servant would think himself entitled to his services, one after another, through the day; and yet would not thank him for them at night, though he had been faithful and obedient. But the Lord has such a property in every creature, as no man can have in another: and he can never be indebted to them for their most constant and unremitted services. The obedience of angels, who do all that is commanded them, and that perfectly, leaves them unprofitable servants, who have only done their duty, without having at all benefited the Lord. The services of redeemed sinners therefore, who never perform their whole duty, who are under peculiar obligations to obedience, and do no good thing, except by his grace, can never *deserve* recompense, or give any ground for boasting. A constant succession of services, and an unreserved obedience, with the deepest sense of dependence, unworthiness, and obligation to the Lord, are therefore here powerfully inculcated.

V. 11—19. (Notes, Matt. viii. 1—4.) At some

place on the confines of Galilee and Samaria, these lepers met Christ in his last circuit. They were companions in distress, and therefore they associated together, though one of them was a Samaritan. Having heard of our Lord's miracles, they earnestly begged of him to compassionate their case and cleanse their leprosy, from a general belief of his power to perform the miracle, though most of them seem to have been destitute of saving faith. Jesus therefore sent them to the priests, some of whom probably lived in that neighbourhood: and being cleansed by the mighty power of Christ, when at a distance from him, they ascertained their cure before the priests, and returned home. But one of them, even the Samaritan, being more deeply affected with the mercy vouchsafed him, came back to Jesus, glorifying the God of Israel; and, returning thanks to his gracious Benefactor, he cast himself prostrate at his feet. This gave our Lord occasion to remark, as with surprise, that this stranger alone had returned to give glory to God; whilst the nine others who had been cleansed, though they were Jews, had failed of rendering him this tribute of gratitude! The Samaritan alone seems to have believed in Jesus, as the Messiah, the Saviour of sinners: and this faith, united with a consciousness of his own unworthiness, produced this difference in his conduct. He was therefore dismissed, with the assurance that his faith had saved him: the others obtained the outward cure, he only got the spiritual blessing.

23 And they shall say unto you, 'See here! or, see there! go not after them, nor follow them.

24 For ^a as the lightning, that lighteth out of the one *part* under heaven, shineth unto the other *part* under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be ^a in his day.

25 But first ^m must he suffer many things, and be ^a rejected of this generation.

26 And ^a as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in ^a the days of the Son of man.

27 They ^a did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark; and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

28 Likewise also, ^a as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded:

29 But ^a the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

stone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

30 Even thus shall it be ^a in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

31 In that day, ^a he which shall be upon the house-top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

32 ^a Remember Lot's wife.

33 Whosoever ^a shall seek to save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life, shall preserve it.

34 ^a I tell you, ^a in that night there shall be ^a two *men* in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.

35 Two *women* shall be ^a grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

36 Two ^a *men* shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

37 And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, ^a Wheresoever the body *is*, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

V. 20—23. The Pharisees understood that the doctrine of our Lord implied a claim to the character of the promised Messiah: and according to their notions of temporal victory and dominion, they wanted to know of him when the kingdom of God should come? To this he replied, that it would not come with outward observation, or with *ostentatious splendour* and authority: nor would it be needful to point it out to men by such external signs as they expected; for behold the kingdom of God was even then within, or among them! They expected a kingdom like the kingdoms of this world; and overlooked those things, which, according to the prophets, marked out the promised kingdom of the Messiah, which was to be of a spiritual nature, set up in the hearts of men by the power of divine grace. It could not indeed be said to be thus *within* the Pharisees; but it was so, as to many of those whom they despised; and it must be in them thus set up also, or they would have no advantage from it. To this he added, that his disciples would soon be deprived of his personal presence: and while they wished in vain for one of the days which they now enjoyed, or of those which they waited for, of the Son of man when he should come to set up his kingdom, they would be tempted to follow those seducers, who would then pretend to be the Messiah; but they must carefully reject their solicitations. (Notes, &c. Matt. xxiv.)

V. 24—31. (Notes, Matt. xxiv. 23—28. 32—41.)

V. 32—37. (Notes, &c. Gen. xix.) Lot's wife left Sodom; yet lost her life by looking back to those possessions and connexions, which she was called to forsake: and thus she was made a perpetual warning to men, in every

age, not to indulge a wish for those sinful interests which religion bids them renounce, lest they should be drawn aside to destruction. Our Lord further reminded the disciples, that in the day when he should be revealed to execute vengeance on the Jews, those professed Christians, who had sought to preserve their lives by forsaking their religion, would perish miserably; whilst those who were willing to lose their lives for his sake should be marvelously protected: (Matt. xvi. 25.) Providence would indeed singularly interpose, "in that night," in the depth of the distress coming on the Jews, to preserve the remnant of believers that were living among them: inasmuch that when two persons were sleeping or working together in the same place, the Romans would seize upon, or kill, the one, and the other would escape in some unexpected manner. The whole passage may be accommodated to the day of judgment, and the eternal state of men in every age: but many expressions forbid us to give that as the primary interpretation of it. (Marg. Ref.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—10.

Whilst we adore the depths of the divine judgments, in permitting such scandals in the Church as harden multitudes in unbelief; and whilst we allow that "it is impossible," without constant miracles, but that "offences must come;" let us recollect that these considerations do not in the least exculpate those by whom they come. We should therefore fear, more than even violent death, every action that may prejudice men against the Gospel, or

CHAP. XVIII.

The parable of the unjust judge and the importunate widow, showing that men should pray without fainting, 1—8. That of the Pharisee and the publican, 9—14. Jesus receives and blesses little children, showing that his disciples should

stumble so much as one weak believer; and we should “avoid all appearance of evil,” in every case, when we can do it without committing *real evil*. We should therefore endeavour to be harmless in all things, and to do good to all men, as we are able, and also “take heed to ourselves,” not to yield to resentment against such as injure us. If then our brother has trespassed against us, we should privately and meekly expostulate with him; and if he repent, we should cordially forgive him, and be reconciled to him, without insisting rigorously on satisfaction: nay, if this should be repeated many times in a day, we must not allow our amity to be interrupted by it, provided the private wrong does not involve in it a public scandal: for thus the peace of the Church and the good of souls may best be promoted, to which all other considerations should be subordinated. But this strict precept is replete with encouragement to the humble believer. He is often betrayed, more than “seven times a day,” into those things which need repentance and forgiveness; and this consciousness, which covers him with shame, would also sink him into dejection, did he not recollect that his gracious Lord would not require him so constantly to forgive his offending brother, were he not ready also in like manner to forgive his offending children. This will by no means encourage him to sin, but rather lead him to repentance; but it will support him in his painful conflict, while he grieves that “he cannot do the things that he would.”—When we would follow the example of our forgiving Lord, or perform any duty that runs counter to corrupt nature, we shall perceive our need of faith, both to realize our motives to obedience, and to lay hold on an almighty arm for assistance. Then we shall also feel the weakness of our faith, and our inability to strengthen it; and be led to look unto Jesus, both as the Author and Object of faith; beseeching him to increase that precious grace, on which the exercise of all others depends: nor will the Lord refuse to answer this request. All men are bound to be the servants of the great Creator, and to devote all their time and powers to him; and are justly condemned for not doing all the things that were commanded. But as Christians we are servants to our redeeming God, and bound to obedience by still immensely superior obligations. We should therefore serve him in our several places, without intermission: one duty should succeed another, through each of our days; and every personal interest or indulgence should be postponed, and give place to his glory and his command; yet at last we *merit* no reward, and have nothing to boast of; but must still say, “We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do;” and at the same time we must humbly confess our guilt, in every instance in which we have come short

be like them, 15—17. He detects the covetousness of a young ruler; shows the danger of riches; and promises great rewards to those, who have forsaken things present for his sake, 18—30. He foretells his own sufferings, death, and resurrection, 31—34. He opens the eyes of a blind man, 35—43.

of this perfect obedience. But were it possible for a man to serve God as Paul did, or even as Gabriel doth, and then to become exalted in an opinion of his own worthiness, this would tarnish all, and he would “fall into the “condemnation of the devil.” How horribly impious then, how sacrilegious must it be, for sinners to boast of their poor polluted services, as if they could atone for their sins, make God their debtor, or purchase heavenly felicity!

V. 11—19.

Through pride, ingratitude towards God came into the world. Of the vast multitudes, who were created, and are upheld by his power, and who feast upon his bounty, how few are thankful for his goodness! When vice and folly bring sickness on men, and the Lord in mercy again restores their health, most of them immediately use their returning vigour in adding to their former provocations. Of the numbers discharged cured from our various hospitals, how few “return to give glory to God,” “not only with their lips, but in their lives!” Even of those who cry unto him in distress, and entreat him mercifully to spare them, how few afterwards “praise him for his “goodness,” and live to his glory! Of those whom ministers visit in sickness, and who give some indications of repentance, how large a proportion, when they recover in answer to their prayers, have only to disappoint their expectations! In this case it may generally be said, “Were there not ten healed? But where are the nine?” And of those, who enjoy the best means of grace, and make some general profession of seeking mercy from Jesus, how few are there, who glorify God by living according to that profession! All this springs from the want of a broken heart; a deep sense of their need of free salvation, and a real application to Christ to cleanse them from the leprosy of sin. For when a man is convinced of his guilt and pollution, and that he must for ever be excluded from the company of God and his saints, unless he be cleansed by the divine Saviour, he will earnestly seek mercy, by using the means of grace, and observe the Lord’s directions in humble expectation: and when he experiences the comfort of his forgiveness, and the power of his new-creating Spirit, he will glorify God, and most thankfully adore the gracious Saviour. This is the source of gratitude in our sinful hearts; it springs from deep humility and lively faith, and it produces fervent praises and cheerful obedience. Thus strangers are brought nigh to the Lord; poor Samaritans put to shame and condemn proud Israelites; they who have greatly sinned, “love much, because much hath been forgiven them;” and whilst they give the whole praise to the Lord, he delights

xi. 5—6 xxix. 36
Gen. xxi. 9
10—24 Job
xxviii. 1—10 Ps.
116, 17. lxxviii.
3. *Marg.* cxlii.
5—7. Jer. xxix.
12, 13. Rom. xii.
12. Gal. v. 18.
Phil. ii. 6. Col.
iv. 12. 1 Thes.
17.

b. Ps. xciii. 13
Job. ii. 7. Gal.
v. 9. Heb. xii.
5. *Gr.* certain city.
c. 4. Es. xviii. 21.
22. 2 Chr. xix.
6—9. Jer. xlii.
7—17. Ps. lxxxii.
1—4. Jer. xxiii.
16, 17. Ez. xlii.
6—9. Mic. iii. 1.
—3. Rom. iii. 14—18.
—d. Prov. xxix. 7. Is. xxxvii. 8.
—e. Deut. xxvii. 19. 2 Sam.
xiv. 5. *Mc.* Job xxii. 9. xxix. 13. Is. i. 17. 21—23. Jer. v. 28. —f. 7. Rom. xlii. 3.
4. —g. xii. 17. xvi. 3. Heb. iv. 12, 13.

AND he spake a parable unto them
to this end, ^a that men ought always
to pray, ^b and not to faint;
2 Saying, There was in a ^c city a
judge, ^c which feared not God, neither
regarded man:

3 And there was ^e a widow in that
city; and she came unto him, saying,
f Avenge me of mine adversary.

4 And he would not for a while: but
afterward ^g he said within himself, Though
I fear not God, nor regard man;

5 Yet ^h because this widow troubleth
me, I will ⁱ avenge her, lest by her conti-
nual coming she ^j weary me.

6 And the Lord said, Hear what the
unjust judge saith.

7 And ^k shall not God ^l avenge his
own elect, ^m which cry day and night
unto him, ⁿ though he bear long with
them?

8 I tell you, though ^o he will avenge
them speedily. Nevertheless, ^p when the
Son of man cometh, shall he find faith
on the earth?

Pet. ii. iii. 8, 9. —p. Matt. xxiv. 9—13. 24. 1 Thes. v. 1—3. Heb. x. 23—36. Jam. v. 1—6.

h. xi. 9. Judg. xvi.
16. 2 Sam. xiii.
24—27.
1. 39. Mat. xv. 23.
Mark x. 47, 48.
3. *Marg.* 13. Mat.
vii. 11.
1. 1 Sam. xxv. 13
—12. xxvii. 10, 11.
19. Is. 12. x. 15
—19. lvi. 1—7.
Jer. xx. 11—13.
Mark i. 6, 7.
Rev. vi. 10, 11.
xviii. 20.
m. li. 37. Ps.
lxxviii. 1. 1
Thes. iii. 10.
1 Tim. v. 5.
2 Tim. i. 3. Rev.
xii. 10.
n. Ps. xlii. 1, 2.
O. Ps. xlii. 3. Heb.
x. 35—37.
P. Ps. xlii. 5.
cxlii. 7—9. 2.
36. Jam. v. 1—6.

in communicating comfort to them. And let us not forget, that we cannot honour the Father, except we honour his beloved Son; and that when we bow to Jesus in adoring gratitude, we most acceptably give glory unto God.

V. 20—37.

It is not uncommon for men to profess that they are inquiring after truth, and waiting for the kingdom of God, while they oppose the progress that it makes among them, and despise those who have it set up within them. They are looking for outward splendour, human wisdom, or the success of their own party; but the kingdom of God consists not in meats and drinks, in vestments and temples, in names and forms; but “in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;” and it commonly has the greatest success, when least attended with ostentation; when unassuming modesty and gentleness characterize the instruments employed; and when “the word of truth and the power of God,” silently operate, and nothing noisy or showy attracts notice, or needlessly excites opposition. —Many, who now despise the days of the Son of man, and refuse to hearken to his Gospel, will at length dolefully wish they might see one more such day: but this will for ever be in vain; and even in this world, they who despise the truth commonly become the dupes of destructive lies, and are given up to strong delusions. Our blessed Redeemer hath finished his sufferings, and ascended into his glory. The generation to whom he preached, and among whom he wrought his miracles, rejected and crucified him: but his day of vengeance soon arrived; his powerful indignation, like lightning, was diffused throughout the land, and the Jews were destroyed amidst their carnal security and sensual indulgence, by as tremendous judgments as the deluge, or as the fire and brimstone which destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Yea, divine vengeance followed even the scattered remnant of them, as eagles resort to the carcasses are laid; and in some sense they are pursued by it to this day. Yet the remnant, who obeyed the word and relied on the promise of Christ, were as remarkably preserved. But hath not the Saviour been rejected by other generations also? And is there not a still more awful day coming, when he shall appear to judge the world? In this we are all interested. Yet, alas! most men live now, as they did in the days of Noah and of Lot,

notwithstanding the warnings given in the word of God, to prepare to meet him in judgment! They are generally given up to their worldly interests or pleasures, as if life had no period, or there were no future judgment. In this course they proceed, till death, like the deluge, or the fire from heaven, sweeps them into destruction! And thus will it also be in the day, when the Son of man shall be revealed. But let those, who profess to be Christ’s disciples, make haste to escape for their lives; to get into the ark; to flee from Sodom; to renounce all for Christ; to prepare to meet their God! Let us all remember Lot’s wife, that we may no longer hanker after those things which we have left behind, nor be tempted to “draw back unto perdition;” let us venture our lives and souls in the Lord’s hands; and fear nothing so much as being deluded into sinful methods of seeking present security; and then we shall certainly be “kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.” The time is speedily coming, when they who have lived together in families, united in the most endeared relations, partners in the same employments, or even partakers of the same religious ordinances, will, in numberless instances, be finally and eternally separated; whilst one shall be taken to heaven, and another left to perish for ever in hell! For as the messengers of the Lord’s mercy will gather together his elect from the four winds of heaven, into his kingdom of complete felicity, so the executioners of his vengeance will pursue the wicked to every place whither they may flee to hide themselves, that they may cast them into the furnace of his fiery indignation. “Remember us, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: Oh, visit us with thy Salvation.” (Ps. cvi. 4, 5.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII. V. 1—8. This parable is prefaced by a brief exposition. It was spoken, “that men should pray always and not faint.” They ought to pray constantly at stated times; to be habitually in that spirit of humble dependence, desire, and expectation, which give life to prayer; to be frequently offering ejaculatory petitions; and to be always ready for prayer, secret, social, or public, when opportunity is afforded: and they ought not to faint, through delays, disappointments, difficulties, temptations, persecutions, and conflicts with in-dwelling sin; or even if foiled repeatedly in those conflicts. Our

q. 29. xv. 22. 9 ¶ And he spake this parable unto certain ^a which trusted in themselves. * that they were righteous, ^a and despised others :

10 Two men went up ^a into the temple to pray ; the one ^a a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

11 The Pharisee ^a stood, and prayed thus with himself, ^a God, I thank thee, that I am not ^a as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week, ^a I give

tithe of all that I possess.

13 And the publican, ^a standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, ^a but smote upon his breast, saying, ^a God be merciful to me ^a a sinner.

14 I tell you, this man ^a went down to his house ^a justified *rather* than the other : for ^a every one that exalteth himself shall be abased ; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Lord, however, in giving this general rule, seems to have had a particular reference to the state of his disciples, under the persecutions which awaited them from the unbelieving Jews, before his coming with power to set up his kingdom, and execute vengeance on their enemies. For this, they were exhorted to pray without fainting. And, to encourage them in so doing, he stated the case of a magistrate, who neither regarded the favour of God, nor feared his wrath ; and who cared not for the welfare or opinion of men, but determined cases merely as best suited his interest, convenience, or caprice. To this man, a widow made application for protection against her oppressor ; and, as often as he appeared in public, she renewed her demand ; but as he cared not for the wrong done her, and hoped for no profit, and feared no danger from her, he for a time refused to do her justice. At length, however, he revolved the matter in his mind, and, though he gloried in disregarding both God and man, yet he determined to defend her, and punish her adversary, lest she should weary, or *stun* him, with her continual applications. Now, if an unjust judge might be induced to an action contrary to his habitual character and inclination, for a person whom he neither loved nor feared, merely by an importunity which he hated, how much more would God, who is perfect in justice, truth, and goodness, answer the persevering prayers of his people, whom he loveth, (even those prayers in which he delighteth,) by fulfilling those promises which he hath given for the glory of his name, and in such interpositions as accord to his own holy excellency ? He might indeed *begin* with them, and leave them to pray for a long time, under troubles and discouragements, to prove their sincerity, and to increase their grace ; but he would doubtless answer them in due time, deliver them from their afflictions, and *speedily* *avenge* them on their enemies ; (for "vengeance belongeth to *him*.") This will be *speedily* ; as it will come soon enough for every good purpose, and in a sudden and unexpected manner. The word *elect* or *chosen*, cannot, in this connexion, relate to any, but those who have already been called by divine grace to join the number of fervent supplicants : and the answer to their prayers for deliverance necessarily implies the infliction of vengeance on their impenitent persecutors. The concluding clause may be differently interpreted : probably our Lord meant, that

when he came to deliver the Church and to avenge his people on their Jewish persecutors, he should find but little faith in the land. The Jews would be hardened in unbelief ; and the Christians, having been harassed by long persecutions, would be ready to doubt of the performance of his word ; whilst many would draw back to perdition. It may also refer to the general weakness of the faith of his tempted and afflicted people, whilst they are waiting for him to come to their relief. Some think that a great prevalence of infidelity will take place just before Christ shall come to judge the world : (*Note, Rev. xxi. 7-9* ;) as it is probable there will be immediately before the introduction of the millennium.

V. 9-14 (*Notes, &c. xiv. 7-11.*) The persons to whom our Lord spake this parable were confident that they were righteous, accepted of God, and his peculiar favourites ; and they despised others who did not comply with their rules, as vile and unholy. The Pharisees were especially meant, who depended on exemption from gross immoralities, attendance on the externals of religion, and exact observance of the traditions of the elders. (*Marg. Ref.*) To these persons our Lord stated, that two men went up to the temple to perform their devotions : the one a Pharisee, one of that sect who were looked upon as examples of piety ; the other a publican, one of those who were regarded as the vilest of sinners. The Pharisee, full of self-confidence, stood boldly, "by himself," at a distance from other worshippers, that he might be noticed, or that he might not be polluted, by them. In this situation he addressed God, thanking him, that he was not as other men, or as the *rest* of men, were ; enumerating some vices from which he was free, and some supposed duties in which he was exact ; and viewing the publican at a distance with contempt and abhorrence. A humble believer indeed will say, "God, I thank thee, that I am not *like other men* ;" meaning, that the whole difference between him and the vilest of those who disgrace civil society, or are cut off from it by the hand of the executioner, is owing wholly to providential restraints, or to the sanctifying grace of God : but at the same time he has very many sins to confess with deep humiliation ; he feels himself a guilty, polluted, weak, foolish, indigent creature ; he does not readily conclude any one to be viler than he ; all circumstances considered ; he pities and prays for the

11 Sam. i. 24.
 Mark x. 13—
 15. Mark x. 13—
 16.
 16. 49, 50, 54.
 Gen. xvii. 10.
 114. xxiv. Deut.
 xxiv. 15. xxvii.
 2. Chr. x. 8.
 17. Jer. xxxv.
 39. Acts ii. 39.
 1 Cor. xii. 14.
 1. Matt. x. 3.
 4. 1 Cor. xiv.
 20. 1. Pet. ii. 2.
 5. Pa. cxxxi. 1, 2.
 1. Mark x. 15.
 6. Matt. xiv. 16.
 1. Mark x. 17.
 2. xxviii. 31. Mat.
 i. 6. John x. 11.
 13—15.
 1. 25. Acts ii.
 37. Gen. 50.
 1. 35. xi. 13. Job
 xiv. 8. xv. 14—
 16. xxv. 4.
 1. Tim. ii. 16.
 1. Heb. vi. 26.
 Jan. i. 17.
 x. 26—28. Is.
 vii. 20. Matt.
 xix. 17—19.
 Mark x. 18, 19.
 Rom. iii. 20.
 vii. 7—11.
 1. Ex. xx. 12—17.
 Deut. v. 16—21.
 Rom. xiii. 9.
 Gal. ii. 10—13.
 Eph. i. Col. iii.
 25. Jan. ii. 8—11.
 1. ii. 12. xv. 7.
 20. Matt. xix.
 29, 31. Mark x.
 50, 21. Rom. x.
 2, 3. Phil. i. 6.
 2. S. x. xxviii.
 5. Phil. iii. 10.
 5. Pet. iii. 8.
 1. xli. 33. xxi. 8.
 1. xli. 19, 19.
 20. Acts ii. 44.
 45. iv. 34—37.
 1. Tim. vi. 18, 19.

15 ¶ And ¹they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when *his* disciples saw *it*, ²they rebuked them.

16 But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, ¹Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: ²for of such is the kingdom of God.

17 Verily I say unto you, ¹Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein.

18 ¶ And ¹a certain ruler asked him, saying, ²Good Master, ³what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

19 And Jesus said unto him, ¹Why callest thou me good? none *is* good, save one, *that is* God.

20 Thou ¹knowest the commandments, ²Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.

21 And he said, ¹All these have I kept from my youth up.

22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou ¹one thing: ²sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have

treasure in heaven: ³and come, follow me.

23 And when he heard this, ¹he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

24 And when Jesus saw that ¹he was very sorrowful, he said, ²How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

25 For it is easier for ¹a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

26 And they that heard *it*, said, ¹Who then can be saved?

27 And he said, ¹The things which are impossible with men, are possible with God.

28 ¶ Then Peter said, ¹Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.

29 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, ¹There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake,

30 Who shall not receive ¹manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

iv. & vi. 6. 1^o & 2^o & 3^o Rev. ii. 17. 21.

most abandoned, and hopes that they are penitent, whenever there are favourable appearances; and he knows, that he is still liable to be tempted to the most atrocious crimes, unless the Lord uphold him. Whereas, "God I thank thee," was but a word of course, in the Pharisee's mouth. He spake as if he had not been a sinner, in any respect; and as if he were in no danger at all of falling into temptation and sin. He mentioned the publican, as one for whom there was no pardon, or as if it had been impossible that he should repent: and he could not expatiate on his own goodness, without contrasting it with the publican's supposed extortion and injustice. Indeed, there was neither confession nor petition in his prayer: but he was in his own opinion "rich, increased with goods, and had need of nothing." But a man may be exempt from the gross crimes of robbery, extortion, and adultery; and yet be covetous, unmerciful, contentious, revengeful, proud, envious, deceitful; in short, like Satan, in all the leading features of his character. He may use uncommanded austerities, fast twice a week, or more frequently, be scrupulously honest in some particulars even to minuteness, and yet be destitute of judgment, mercy, and the love of God: nay, he may be a vile hypocrite, a perjurer, and even a sensualist: he may not be "like the publican," and yet far viler than he. But the publican, "stood afar off," in some corner of the place, as unworthy to come near the other worshippers, and especially to approach *that holy man* the Pharisee: and though his burdened conscience and inward distress constrained him to pray, yet

he presumed not to lift up his eyes unto heaven; but with down-cast looks, as one overwhelmed with shame, and smiting upon his breast, as full of self-abhorrence at the recollection of his crimes, only said, "God be merciful to me a sinner." These emphatical words, which in the original imply the idea of atonement as the ground of forgiveness; when really the language of the heart, express humiliation for sin, repentance, submission to God's righteousness, faith, and hope of pardon and acceptance. Thus the publican left his cause with God, and returned home to his house. But our Lord assured those "who trusted in themselves," that he was justified, or counted a righteous person before God, "rather than," or in preference to, "the other." The Pharisee, relying on the merit of his own goodness, and puffed up with an opinion of his singular holiness, remained under the condemnation of the law, and a stranger to the grace of the Gospel; but the publican, by confessing his guilt, and crying for mercy as a sinner, became partaker of the blessings of the new covenant of mercy and grace. (Note, xiv. 7—11.)

V. 15—17. (Notes, &c. Matt. xix. 13—15. Mark x. 13—16.)

V. 18—30. (Notes, Matt. xix. 16—20. Mark x. 17—31.) "Let us not mistake the character of this individual. He was unquestionably covetous: for it is said of him that he had large possessions, which he could not find in his heart to sell and give to the poor, at the command of him whom he professed to reverence as the Messiah. Christ detected the covetousness of his heart,

CHAP. XIX.

The conversion of Zaccheus the publican, 1—10. The parable of a nobleman going to receive a kingdom, and intrusting money to his servants; with the account required of them, and the punishment of his enemies, 11—27. Jesus enters Jerusalem riding on an ass, amid the acclamations of the multitude, 28—38. He answers the objection of the Pharisees,

39, 40; weeps over the city, and predicts its destruction, 41—44; drives the traders from the temple, 45, 46; and teaches daily at the temple, while the rulers seek to kill him, 47, 48.

AND Jesus entered and passed through ^a Jericho.

2 And, behold, there was a man named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the publicans, ^b and he was rich.

a Josh ii 1 v 1
1. 86 26. 1
Ephes xvi 24. 2
K ogs 4 18—22

b xviii 24—27 3
Chr xvii 5, 6.

with their destruction. Whether we seek to be delivered from temptation, to have our iniquities subdued, and our souls comforted, or whether we pray for the peace of the Church, we shall at length be answered, if we are earnest and importunate : and, however long, the Lord “bear with us,” our requests will be granted in the best time, and perhaps when we least expect it. However infidels may deride and defy the threatened judgments of God, or however Christians may be tempted to despond concerning his promises, yet they will all be accomplished in the appointed season : and the surprise of terror on the one hand, and that of joy on the other, will then be nearly equal. But let us beware of presenting proud devotions to the Lord : too many of different descriptions “trust in themselves “that they are righteous,” and take it for granted that they are the peculiar, and almost exclusive, favourites of heaven ; whilst their contempt of others proves the haughtiness and uncharitableness of their hearts. Such men may address the Lord in a high tone of confidence and familiarity ; they may profess to give him the glory ; aver that they are not extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or like the poor Publicans around them ; and glory in their gifts, forms, notions, or austerities ; yet it will be proved, that “they have exalted themselves,” and therefore God will certainly “abase them :” and all their revilings, calumnies, and rash judgments, will fall on their own heads, and increase their shame and everlasting contempt ; except they be previously humbled in deep repentance, and come with despised Publicans for unmerited mercy. But “blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom “of heaven.” The man, who abhors and condemns himself ; who approaches God with deep self-abasement, and reverence of his holy majesty ; who looks into his past life, his present conduct, his heart, his duties, with humiliation of soul ; who is ready to think every one better than himself, and must despair were it not for the Gospel-report of free salvation ; who seeks for mercy with a trembling heart and with earnest desires, in the way and through the name that God hath revealed ; this man will sooner be heard and accepted, when he breathes out, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” than any Pharisee, with his long prayers or boasted services. This is the path to honour, glory, immortality, and eternal life ; whilst “pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit “before a fall.” Let us then take heed not to glory in ourselves, or to despise others ; let us also be careful not to discourage the weak or the ignorant, or to deter men from coming themselves, or bringing their children, unto

Christ ; and let us recollect, that “except we receive the “kingdom of God as a little child, we shall in no wise “enter therein.”

V. 18—43.

The best obedience of mere man, to the holy commandments of God, must leave him under condemnation. We may compliment one another as *good* ; but in fact “there is none *good*, no not one,” our glorious Emmanuel alone excepted. The more confident men are, that they have kept all the commandments, or any of them, from their youth, the plainer it is, that they lack understanding in the spiritual meaning of them ; and that they are strangers to repentance, to faith, to their own real character, their own hearts, and their need of a free salvation. Their obedience also, when brought to the touchstone, will be found of no value in the sight of God : for the love of the world, in one form or other, lies at the root of their flourishing gourd, and will shortly wither it. Prosperity, authority, and reputation, tend to feed this ruinous self-flattery, as well as an attachment to earthly objects : many who have serious thoughts depart very sorrowful, because they are very rich, and unwilling to part with, or distribute, their idolized treasures, at the command and for the sake of Christ. So that it would be impossible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God, were it not, that with God all things are possible. But men are in general as backward to derive instruction from the humiliation, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Christ, as the disciples were to regard his declarations concerning those events : and for the same reason ; even because self-love and a desire of worldly objects close their understandings, and warp their judgments ; so that they are left in the dark about the evident meaning of the Scriptures, whilst they perplex or amuse themselves and others, by endeavouring to find out some hidden sense which accords better to their pre-conceived opinions. Were it not for this, all would see, that they best consult their present comfort, as well as their eternal good, when they renounce any earthly possession or enjoyment, at Christ’s command and for his sake. Would we then rightly understand these things, we must come to him, like the blind man, earnestly beseeching him to open our eyes, and to show us more and more clearly the excellency of his precepts, and the preciousness of his salvation : and then, being saved by faith, we shall learn to follow him, glorifying God ; and his other disciples, also witnessing the change, will praise God continually on our behalf.

3 And ^a he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, ^b because he was little of stature.

4 And he ran before, ^c and climbed up into ^d a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

5 And when Jesus came to the place, ^e he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, ^f Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; ^g for to-day I must abide at thy house.

6 And ^h he made haste, and came down, and received him ⁱ joyfully.

7 And when they saw ^j it, ^k they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

8 And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, ^l Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man ^m by false accusation, ⁿ I restore him four-fold.

9 And Jesus said unto him, ^o This day is salvation come to this house, ^p forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX. V. 1—10. Zaccheus seems to have farmed the taxes of a certain district: so that he was "the chief among the publicans," or the ruler of them, having many others under him, who either rented of him smaller portions, or were employed as his servants to collect the taxes. It is probable that he possessed considerable property before he engaged in this employment, as large securities were required of those who farmed the revenue under the Roman governors: but he had doubtless greatly increased his wealth by his lucrative occupation. It does not appear that he had previously any serious concern about religion; and his contrivance to get a sight of Jesus was probably the result of curiosity, which the miracle just before wrought on Bartimeus could not fail to increase. In what manner the words of our Lord affected his mind, we cannot tell; but without all doubt they were attended with a divine influence to humble and change his heart, and to make way for true repentance and living faith: he therefore gladly welcomed Christ, and doubtless was further instructed, convinced, and determined by his discourse. Whilst the Pharisees and others, as usual, murmured at our Lord's inviting himself to be the guest of a man, whose employment and character were infamous, in preference to any of the priests, or Levites, who resided there; Zaccheus stood forth, in the midst of the company, and, avowing the change which had taken place in his judgment and disposition, he professed his purpose of immediately devoting half his wealth to charitable uses, and of making four-fold restitution, to all those whom he had wronged. The Publicans were used to charge the people

10 For ^a the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because ^b they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

12 He said therefore, ^c A certain nobleman went into ^d a far country ^e to receive for himself a kingdom, ^f and to return.

13 And he called ^g his ten servants, and ^h delivered them ten ⁱ pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

14 But ^j his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.

15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, ^k having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, ^l that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

more than the real amount of their taxes; and then, if they refused to pay it, they "falsely accused them" to the Romans, as disobedient to their authority; and thus they obtained the assistance of the military to enforce their exorbitant demands: in every instance that Zaccheus had thus, or in any other manner, oppressed and injured any man, he was determined to make the utmost restitution required by the law in case of concealed theft. (*Marg. Ref.*) It has been argued, that he could not have got much of his wealth by extortion, or his estate would not have sufficed for such a restitution, after half of it had been given to the poor; especially if he reserved any part of it for himself: but it is more reasonable to suppose, that he did not give half to the poor till after the restitution had been made, as he could not previously consider his riches as *his own*, even to give away. Perhaps he lay under a worse character than he really deserved: yet the transaction seems recorded as an illustrious triumph of mercy and grace; and the whole narration implies that he was before a bad man. But Jesus, knowing the sincerity and humility of his professed subjection to the Gospel, declared, that "salvation was *that day* come to his house;" he and his family had before been estranged from it; but it was now come thither: "forasmuch as he also was a son of Abraham," not only according to the flesh, but as being now made partaker of Abraham's faith and privileges, and the promises made to him and his seed: for this was indeed the very end for which he, "the Son of man," was come into the world, even to seek out and save lost sinners. (*Marg. Ref.*) The name of Zaccheus, (which is the same with Zaccai, *Ezra* ii. 9.) shows that he was a Jew. (*Doddridge.*)

way, and found even as he had said unto them.

33 And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt?

34 And they said, ^a The Lord hath need of him.

35 And they brought him to Jesus : and ^a they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon.

36 And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.

37 And when he was come nigh, even now ^a at the descent of the mount of Olives, ^a the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice, and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen ;

38 Saying, ^b Blessed ^{be} the King that cometh in the name of the Lord ; ^c peace ⁱⁿ in heaven, and ^d glory in the highest.

39 And some of the Pharisees from

among the multitude said unto him, Master, ¹ rebuke thy disciples.

40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, ^m the stones would immediately cry out.

41 [¶] And when he was come near, he beheld the city, ^a and wept over it,

42 Saying, ^o If thou hadst known, even thou, at least ^p in this thy day, ^o the things ^{which} *which* belong unto thy peace ! ^q but now they are hid from thine eyes.

43 For ^r the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall ^t cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

44 And shall ^u lay thee even with the ground, and ^v thy children within thee ; and they shall not ^w leave in thee one stone upon another ; ^x because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

2 Cor. iii. 14-16. iv. 3, 4. 2 Thes. ii. 9-12. — xxxi. 20-24. Dent. xxxiii. 47, 58. 2 Cor. xxi. 12, 13. Dan. ix. 26, 27. Matt. xiii. 37-39. Mark xiii. 14-27. 1 Thes. ii. 15, 16. — 1 Is. xxxix. 1-4. Jer. vi. 3-6. — u. 1 Kings ix. 7, 8. Mic. iii. 12. — x. xiii. 34. Matt. xxiii. 37. — y. Matt. xxiv. 2. Mark xiii. 2. — z. 42. i. 68. John vii. 16-21. 1 Pet. ii. 12.

1 Is. xxxix. 11. Matt. xxiii. 13. John xi. 47, 48. xii. 10, 19. Acts iv. 1, 2. 16-18. Jam. iv. 5. m Ps. cxvii. 11. xxi. 7-9. cxiv. 1-8. Is. lv. 12. Hab. ii. 11. Matt. iii. 9. xvi. 10. xxviii. 5. 51-54. 2 Pet. ii. 16. n Ps. cxix. 53. 136. 159. Jer. ix. 1. xvi. 17. Is. xlviii. 18. Ez. xxviii. 31, 32. xxxiii. 11. o Ps. xxxix. 1. Is. lv. 6. John xii. 35, 36. 2 Cor. i. 12. q. 17-29. ii. 10-14. x. 5, 6. Acts x. 41. 45. Heb. iii. 3 x 26. — 29. xii. 24-26. Is. vi. 9, 10. Jer. ix. 10. 14. xiv. 16. Matt. xiii. 41. 45. 50. — 51. Acts xxviii. 25-27. Rom. xi. 7-10. 2 Cor. iii. 14-16. iv. 3, 4. 2 Thes. ii. 9-12. — xxxi. 20-24. Dent. xxxiii. 47, 58. 2 Cor. xxi. 12, 13. Dan. ix. 26, 27. Matt. xiii. 37-39. Mark xiii. 14-27. 1 Thes. ii. 15, 16. — 1 Is. xxxix. 1-4. Jer. vi. 3-6. — u. 1 Kings ix. 7, 8. Mic. iii. 12. — x. xiii. 34. Matt. xxiii. 37. — y. Matt. xxiv. 2. Mark xiii. 2. — z. 42. i. 68. John vii. 16-21. 1 Pet. ii. 12.

d. Zech. ix. 9. John x. 33. xvi. 16. 2 Cor. vii. 9.

e. 2 Kings ix. 13. Matt. xxi. 7, 8. Mark xi. 7, 8. Gal. i. 15, 16. f. 22. Mark xiii. 3. xiv. 26. g. vii. 16. Ez. xvi. 1. h. 1. 8c. 2 Sam. vi. 12-16. i. 1 Kings viii. 55. 28. xvi. 4. 8c. 2 Chr. xxix. 20-30. 36. Ezra iii. 10-13. Ps. cii. 11, 12. John xii. 12, 13. L. xlviii. 35. Ps. lxxviii. 17-19. cxviii. 22-26. 28. 38. 9. Matt. xxi. 9. Mark xi. 9, 10. i. 10-11. Eph. i. 14-18. Col. i. 20. k. Eph. i. 6, 12, 13. 10. 21. i. Tim. i. 17. 1 Pet. i. 12. l. v. v. 9-13. xix. 1-6.

V. 33-40. (Notes, &c. Matt. xxi. 1-11. Mark xi. 1-11. John xii. 12-19. Marg. Ref.)—*I tell you, &c.* (40.) The numerous miracles, which had been wrought by our Lord, (especially that of raising Lazarus from the dead, a short time before,) and the evident fulfilment of ancient prophecies in him, rendered it so manifest that he was the promised Messiah, that if the Jews refused to own and honour him as such, some other method would be taken, which would appear to the Pharisees as strange, as if the very stones should speak and declare him to be the King of Israel and Lord of glory. The expression was proverbial, but the calling of the Gentiles seems to have been alluded to. (Marg. Ref.)—It is observable, that towards the close of his life, our Lord gradually laid aside that reserve, which he before used. He no longer enjoined silence on those who were healed by him : and he, in this instance, expressly declared himself to be the Son of David and the King of Israel. His time was now come ; and so the reasons for his former caution no longer existed. ‘ When they linger, who ought ^a to be the chief preachers and setters forth of the kingdom ^a of God, he will raise up others extraordinarily, in despite ^a of them.’ (Beza.)

V. 41-44. When Jesus approached Jerusalem, and had a clear view, from the adjacent hills, of its magnificence and prosperity, instead of being affected by the prospect of those indignities and sufferings which there awaited him, or expressing any resentment for the base usage which he was about to experience, he foresaw the miseries coming on that ungrateful and persecuting city, by the awful justice of God, with tears of deep compassion : saying, as with a wish or ardent desire, expressive of his deep concern, “ if thou hadst,” or, “ Oh, that thou hadst known, in this thy day,” (the time when the

city was honoured and favoured with the presence of her King, Messiah, the Son of God,) “ the things, which ^a belonged to thy peace,” or *prosperity* ! But that day was then expired, her doom was passed, her eyes were blinded, and every thing conducive to her welfare was judiciously kept out of sight. Our Lord therefore concluded with predicting the siege and entire destruction of the city, and the havoc to be made of its devoted inhabitants ; because they knew not the time of their gracious visitation, but had rejected, and were about to crucify, their King. (Marg. Ref.) ‘ Christ is not simply delighted with the destruction, no not of the wicked.’ (Beza.) The possibility, nay, the actual existence, of an union betwixt awful justice denouncing sentence against the criminal, and benevolence sympathizing in his misery, even to tears, is most affectingly shown in this passage. So that it stands as an unanswerable refutation of those charges, which are constantly brought against such as denounce the vengeance of God on impenitent sinners, as if they must of course be actuated by malevolence. All such accusations involve the Saviour himself, as well as the prophets and apostles, along with modern teachers and professors of Christianity, under one general condemnation. (Note Ez. xvi. 23. xxxiii. 11.) The language of the original is abrupt and interrupted ; and peculiarly suited to show the deep interest which the speaker took in the concerns of those, about whom he was discoursing. ‘ If after ^a slaying so many prophets, and so often refusing me, ^a the Lord of the prophets, in this my last coming to thee, ^a thou hadst had any regard to thyself !’ (Beza.) ‘ When Vespasian besieged Jerusalem, his army compassed the city round about, and kept them in on every side. And though it was judged a great and almost impracticable work to compass the city with a wall.

Matt. xxi. 12.
 13 Mar. xi. 15.
 17 John ii.
 12-16.
 18 Deut. xiv. 25, 26.
 c Ps. xcii. 5 Is.
 lvi. 7 Jer. xii.
 11 Ez. xliii. 12.
 Hos. xii. 7.
 Matt. xxiii. 14.
 d xxi. 37, 38.
 Matt. xxi. 23.
 Mark xi. 27, 28.
 John xviii. 20.

45 ¶ And he ^a went into the temple, and began to cast out them that ^b sold therein, and them that bought;

46 Saying unto them, ^c It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.

47 ¶ And ^d he taught daily in the

temple. But ^e the chief priests, and the scribes, and the chief of the people, sought to destroy him;

48 And ^f could not find what they might do: for all the people ^g were very attentive to hear him.

c Matt. xxi. 34.
 Mark xii. 13.
 xiv. 1 John xii.
 19, 24, vii. 37-
 40, x. 39, xi. 53
 -57.
 f xxi. 19, 20 xxi.
 2, 1 Matt. xxiii.
 15, 61.
 g Or, *attended on*
 him. Neh. vii.
 3 John vi. 45-
 47. Acts xvii. 14.

yet, Titus animating his soldiers to attempt it, they in three days built a wall of thirty-nine furlongs, having thirteen castles in it; and so cut off all hopes that any of the Jews within the city should escape. Titus having commanded his soldiers to dig up the city, this was so fully done, that they who came to see it were persuaded it never could be built again. (*Josephus.*)

V. 45-48. *Attentive, &c.* (48.) 'They listened to him with such great attention, that they hung as it were upon his lips as he spake.' (*Doddridge.*) (*Notes, Matt. xxi. 12-16. Mark xi. 15-18.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-10.

The Lord illustrates by facts what he declares in words, concerning the omnipotency of his grace, and the exceeding riches of his pardoning love. Many are brought to the places where Jesus dispenses his blessings, without any design of obtaining a share of them; and curiosity, though idle and vain, is often over-ruled to bring men acquainted with the Gospel. Whatever puts a sinner, as it were, in the Saviour's way, is a probable means of doing him good. Where the Gospel is preached, Jesus stands and knocks at the door of a man's heart, demanding admission, proposing to be his guest, and promising a royal recompense for his entertainment: but unless grace has prepared the heart, no one will "make haste to receive him joyfully;" when therefore this event takes place, though Pharisees murmur, angels rejoice, adoring the Redeemer's condescension, and congratulating the sinner's felicity. Repentance is not to be estimated by terrors or fears, but by its effects: where it is genuine, a new judgment and disposition are produced, a new character is formed, and a new life is entered on. The penitent gladly welcomes the Saviour, and, whilst he accepts of his free salvation, he devotes himself to his service. If he possess wealth, he will immediately think of becoming a faithful steward: and though he may not be called actually to leave all, and follow his Lord, yet he will begin, without any express command, to employ a considerable part of it in charitable uses, according to the degree of his faith and love: and if he is conscious of having defrauded others, he will not count any thing his own, till he has made ample restitution, according to his ability and opportunity. When we see such "fruits meet for repentance," we may cheerfully conclude that salvation is come to the sinner's heart, and that he is become a son of Abraham by faith in Jesus Christ; and we may hope that mercy is intended to his family also. What thanks then do we owe to him, who "came to seek and save the lost?" If we are in the way of salvation, he hath ransomed our souls, sought us

out, and saved us; and the same way is open even to extortioners and harlots; we should therefore gladly use every Scriptural means, or countenance every Scriptural endeavour, to promote the preaching of the Gospel, even to the vilest of sinners; for all objections to such designs arise from the dominion, or the remainder, of pharisaical pride and self-preference.

V. 11-27.

It behooves us carefully to study the nature of the Redeemer's kingdom, that we may understand our present situation, and form just expectations in respect of the future. Our blessed Lord is indeed established on his glorious throne; and it is vain to send a message after him, refusing submission to his authority: yet many, even from pretended regard to the honour and worship of God, (like the Jews of old,) speak as if this was left to their option. They seem to think that they may choose their own way of approaching God, or entering heaven; and determine for themselves by what judge, or according to what rule, their final doom shall be determined. But these things are immutably settled; and all, who will not have the Saviour to reign over them, shall be punished as enemies to his Person and kingdom; of which awful doom the vengeance executed on the unbelieving Jews was an earnest and a shadow. Alas! the number even of his professed servants is very small, in proportion to that of his enemies; and their ability is often little, compared with the talents and possessions which ungodly men abuse. Yet if, in humble faith, cheerful diligence, and patient hope, they occupy with that little till their Lord comes, their reward shall be exceedingly great, and exactly proportioned to the improvement made: though every faithful servant will allow, that the power, the opportunity, and the will, to improve them were wholly from the Lord; and that "his pound hath gained the ten pounds." This union of faithfulness, diligence, and humility, ensures a gracious acceptance: to persons of this character the Lord, when he cometh, will say, "Well done, thou good servant; because thou hast been faithful in a little, have thou authority over ten cities." Whilst these views of the Redeemer's abundant grace encourage the humble believer to increasing diligence, hypocrites are deterred from activity by hard thoughts of him, and a persuasion that his service is unprofitable. But whatever excuses such men now make for their indolence and avarice, their mouths will soon be stopped; and their unimproved advantages will be taken from them, to enrich the faithful servants: "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him."

12 And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out.

13 Then said the Lord of the vineyard, 'What shall I do?' 'I will send my beloved Son: ^b it may be they will reverence him when they see him.

14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they ^c reasoned among themselves, saying, This is ^d the Heir: come, ^e let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.

15 So ^f they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ^g What therefore shall the Lord of the vineyard do unto them?

16 He shall come and ^h destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid.

17 And he ⁱ beheld them, and said, 'What is this then that is written, ^j The Stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the Corner?

18 Whosoever ^m shall fall upon that Stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

19 ¶ And the chief priests and the scribes ⁿ the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

20 And ^o they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should ^p feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so ^q they might deliver

him unto the power and authority of the governor.

21 And they asked him, saying, 'Master, we know that thou ^r sayest and teachest rightly, neither ^s acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God ^t truly:

22 Is it ^u lawful for us to give tribute unto Cesar, or no?

23 But ^v he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, ^w Why tempt ye me?

24 Shew me ^x a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, ^y Cesar's.

25 And he said unto them, ^z Render therefore unto Cesar the things which be Cesar's, and ^a unto God the things which be God's.

26 And ^b they could not take hold of his words before the people: ^c and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.

27 ¶ Then came to him certain of ^d the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection, and they asked him,

28 Saying, Master, 'Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

29 There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, ^e and died without children.

30 And the second took her to wife, and he died childless.

12 And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out.

13 Then said the Lord of the vineyard, 'What shall I do?' 'I will send my beloved Son: ^b it may be they will reverence him when they see him.

14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they ^c reasoned among themselves, saying, This is ^d the Heir: come, ^e let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.

15 So ^f they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ^g What therefore shall the Lord of the vineyard do unto them?

16 He shall come and ^h destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid.

17 And he ⁱ beheld them, and said, 'What is this then that is written, ^j The Stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the Corner?

18 Whosoever ^m shall fall upon that Stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

19 ¶ And the chief priests and the scribes ⁿ the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

20 And ^o they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should ^p feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so ^q they might deliver

him unto the power and authority of the governor.

21 And they asked him, saying, 'Master, we know that thou ^r sayest and teachest rightly, neither ^s acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God ^t truly:

22 Is it ^u lawful for us to give tribute unto Cesar, or no?

23 But ^v he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, ^w Why tempt ye me?

24 Shew me ^x a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, ^y Cesar's.

25 And he said unto them, ^z Render therefore unto Cesar the things which be Cesar's, and ^a unto God the things which be God's.

26 And ^b they could not take hold of his words before the people: ^c and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.

27 ¶ Then came to him certain of ^d the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection, and they asked him,

28 Saying, Master, 'Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

29 There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, ^e and died without children.

30 And the second took her to wife, and he died childless.

31 And the third also took her to wife, and he died without children.

32 And the fourth also took her to wife, and he died without children.

33 And the fifth also took her to wife, and he died without children.

34 And the sixth also took her to wife, and he died without children.

dreadful punishment of all persecutors is also intimated.

V. 19—26. (Notes, Matt. xxii. 15—22. Mark xii. 13—17.) The design of these spies is here more expressly stated than by the other evangelists. 'The last refuge' that false prophets have to destroy the true prophets is, 'to lay treason and sedition to their charge,' (*Besa*).—'They put to him the question about paying tribute to Cesar; hoping, that by denying it to be due to him from the Jews, they might accuse him as an enemy to Cesar: for they knew that his decision of questions, relating only to their law and controversies, would not offend these Gallios.' (*Whitby*). It would be well, if all who are insidiously watched and questioned on such subjects would imitate our Lord's conduct; neither intermeddling with disputable political subjects, nor maintaining a suspicious silence; but plainly showing, that obedience and tribute should be rendered even to usurpers and heathens, while possessed of authority; except where the higher obligation of obedience to God requires the contrary.

31 And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died.

32 Last of all the woman ^a died also.

33 Therefore, ¹ in the resurrection, whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife.

34 And Jesus answering, said unto them, ^k The children of this world ¹ marry, and are given in marriage:

35 But they which shall be ^m accounted worthy ⁿ to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, ^o neither marry, nor are given in marriage:

36 Neither ^p can they die any more: for they are ^q equal unto the angels, and are ^r the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

37 Now that the dead are raised, ^s even Moses shewed at the bush, ^t when he calleth the Lord, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

38 For he is not ^u a God of the dead,

but of the living: ^v for all live unto him.

39 Then certain of the Scribes answering, said, Master, ^y thou hast well said.

40 And after that, ^z they durst not ask him any question at all.

41 ¹ And he said unto them, ^a How say they that ^b Christ is David's Son?

42 And David ^c himself saith in the book of Psalms, ^d the LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

43 Till I make ^e thine enemies thy footstool.

44 David therefore calleth him Lord, ^f how is he then his son?

45 ¹ Then ^g in the audience of all the people, he said unto his disciples,

46 ^h Beware of the Scribes, ⁱ which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts;

47 Which ^j devour widow's houses, ^k and for a shew make long prayers: ^l the same shall receive greater damnation.

48 ^m Matt. xii. 34. 1 Tim. v. 20. — ⁿ Matt. xvi. 6 Mark vii. 5. 2 Tim. iv. 15. — ^o 1 Ki. xiv. 9. 3 John 9. — ^p Matt. xxii. 5-7 Mark xii. 38. 34 Rom. xii. 10 Phil. ii. 3. 3 John 9. — ^q Matt. xii. 14 Mark xii. 10. — ^r 1 Ki. i. 2. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

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CHAP. XXI.

Christ prefers the widow's two mites to the large offerings of the rich, 1—4. He foretells the destruction of the temple, 5, 6; the signs and calamities which would precede and accompany it, giving suitable exhortations and promises, 7—19; and the destruction and continued desolations of Jerusalem, 20—24. The signs of his coming, 25—33. He exhorts to watchfulness and prayer, 34—36. He daily preaches at the temple, and retires at night to the mount of Olives, 37, 38.

AND he looked up, * and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—18.

Men often pretend to inquire into the evidences or doctrines of Revelation, when they are secretly determined not to submit to its authority, and are in fact only seeking plausible apologies for their infidelity and disobedience. But the fear of man and regard to reputation deter them from avowing their real sentiments and purposes. Such objectors should be answered with pertinence, brevity, and caution. It is doing them too much honour, in general, to enter into a formal controversy with them: the best way is to address their consciences by apt illustrations; and so to detect those corrupt affections or secret sins, which are the real grounds of their dislike to the Bible, but which they endeavour to conceal even from themselves. "They flatter themselves in their own sight, until their iniquity be found to be hateful." In this way it may often be shown, that they resemble, in pride, perverseness, ingratitude, enmity to God, and aversion to his holy service, those men who murdered the prophets and crucified the Son of God; in order to establish their own authority and reputation, and live according to their own ungodly lusts without control. But it behooves every one of us, who are favoured with the word and ordinances of God, to inquire, whether we make a proper use of our advantages, and act consistently with our professed subjection to the Gospel? For awful will be the doom, not only of builders that reject him who is the Head-Stone of the corner, but of those who profess to "reverence the Son," and yet render not the fruits of the vineyard in due season.

V. 19—47.

When ministers succeed in bringing the word of God home to the consciences of obstinate transgressors, they will surely be exasperated; and in return they will watch their opportunity and assume every disguise, to fasten some charge upon the character of the ministers, or to expose them to the displeasure of the ruler. But the wisdom from above will direct those, who "teach the way of God

2 And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two * mites.

3 And he said, * Of a truth I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast in more than they all.

4 For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in * all the living that she had.

5 ¶ And * as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said,

6 As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which * there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

"truly," to avoid their snares; and they will instruct men in their duty to God, to the king, and to all men, in so clear a manner, that "such as are of the contrary part may have no evil thing to say of them." Ungodly men continually grow more and more like to "their father the devil, and the lusts of their father they will do;" but let us seek to be daily "transformed in the renewing of our minds," that we may be made meet for, and counted worthy to obtain, the heavenly inheritance, where we shall be "equal to the angels, as the children of God, and the children of the resurrection;" and where "the Lord himself will be our everlasting Light," and our all-sufficient Portion. "Thither our Forerunner," the Son of David and his Lord, "hath for us entered," who is at the right hand of God, and shall there remain till all enemies are put under his feet. Let us therefore fear being found among them; as all hypocrites, infidels, and profligates, most certainly will be; and let us beg of God to preserve us from pride, ambition, covetousness, and every evil thing; and to teach us to seek that honour which cometh from him alone.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI. V. 1—4. (Note, Mark xii. 41—44.) 'This treasury received the voluntary oblations of the worshippers who came up to the feasts; and the money thrown into it was employed to buy wood for the altar, salt, and other necessities, not provided for in any other way.' (Doddridge.) It is probable, that the public sacrifices and the incense were bought with this money; and that part of it was often expended in repairing the temple and its out-buildings. The worshippers from a distance would be the principal persons who cast money into it, at the great feasts; but it does not appear that it was exclusively intended for them.

V. 5. *Goodly, &c.* Josephus says, that some of the stones of the temple were forty-five cubits long, five high, and six broad; and that the marble of it was so white, that it appeared at a distance like a mountain of snow; and several writers have mentioned various oblations of massy gold which were affixed to the walls and pillars, besides the immense riches contained in the treasuries.

11. xii. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945. 946. 947. 948. 949. 950. 951. 952. 953. 954. 955. 956. 957. 958. 959. 960. 961. 962. 963. 964. 965. 966. 967. 968. 969. 970. 971. 972. 973. 974. 975. 976. 977. 978. 979. 980. 981. 982. 983. 984. 985. 986. 987. 988. 989. 990. 991. 992. 993. 994. 995. 996. 997. 998. 999. 1000.

25 ¶ And there shall be * signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, * with perplexity; * the sea and the waves roaring;

26 Men's * hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: * for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

27 And then shall they * see the Son of man coming in a cloud, * with power and great glory.

28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then * look up, and lift up your heads; for your * redemption draweth nigh.

29 ¶ And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees;

40 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

31 So likewise ye, * when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that * the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

32 Verily I say unto you, * This genera-

tion shall not pass away till all be fulfilled.

33 * Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.

34 ¶ And * take heed to yourselves, lest at any time * your hearts be overcharged with * surfeiting, and drunkenness, and * cares of this life, and so * that day come upon you unawares.

35 For * as a snare shall it come on all them that * dwell on the face of the whole earth.

36 * Watch ye therefore, and * pray always, that ye may be * accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to * stand before the Son of man.

37 ¶ And in * the day-time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the * mount of Olives.

38 And * all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

and darken the powers of the understanding, and to render the affections carnal and torpid. So that these sensualities, as well as the cares attending the pursuit of wealth and worldly honours and distinctions, unfit men for religious duties, and make way for the day of evil coming upon them unawares. As the Roman armies invaded Judea and besieged Jerusalem, when they were not expected; and the Jews were every where taken, as "a bird in the snare" of the fowler;" so death surprises most "men that dwell" "on the face of the whole earth," in the same unprepared state: and so will the day of judgment. (*Marg. Ref.*) *Accounted worthy, &c.* (36.) That is, meet persons to be thus delivered and accepted. This must be sought by constant earnest prayer, and must "therefore be the gift" "of God," and not the worthiness of man.

V. 37, 38. These verses show us in what manner our Lord spent the last days preceding his crucifixion. Early every morning he came to Jerusalem, and spent the day at the temple; and in the evening he retired to Bethany, probably to lodge at the house of Lazarus and his sisters. The people, from curiosity, conviction, or expectation, early resorted to attend on his instructions; yet when he would not assume the outward dignity of the regal character, but suffered himself to be apprehended by his enemies, they turned against him, and joined in demanding his crucifixion! (*Marg. Ref.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-19.

The Lord particularly notices the small oblations, which spring from the love of his name in the hearts of his poor

answerable proof of its divine original: and I am verily convinced, that if men were as impartial and unprejudiced in their religious inquiries, as they are in mathematical reasonings, no one, that well considered this prediction and examined its accomplishment, could any more doubt of the truth of the Gospel, than learned men do of the Theorems in Euclid.

V. 25-28. These expressions, of which some were literally verified in those events that preceded, attended, and followed the taking of Jerusalem, and others were figurative of the subversion of the Jewish civil and religious establishment, may also be considered as typical of the awful solemnities, which will usher in Christ's appearance to judge the world. And as the ruin of the Jews procured a respite to the persecuted Christians, so the tremendous events, which make way for the "perdition" "of ungodly men," will introduce the complete redemption of believers from death and every enemy. The ruin of the Jewish nation was attended by violent distractions and convulsions in the adjacent regions. (*Notes, Matt. xxiv. 19-31. Mark xiii. 17-27.*)

V. 29-33. (*Notes, Matt. xxiv. 32-35. Mark xiii. 28-32.*)

V. 34-36. (*Notes, xii. 35-48. Matt. xxiv. 36-51. Mark xiii. 33-37.*) Similar exhortations have been considered in the parallel Scriptures, which may be understood as addressed to the primitive Christians, who were waiting for those awful events which had been foretold: but they are equally applicable to those great concerns in which all men are interested. Excess in eating, drinking, and other animal indulgences, hath a tendency, not only to oppress and disorder the body, but to stupify

CHAP. XXII.

The priests and scribes determine to put Jesus to death, 1, 2. Judas bargains to betray him, 3—6. Two apostles prepare the passover, and Jesus eateth it with the twelve, 7—18. He instituteth the Lord's supper, 19, 20; points out the traitor, 21—23; checks the ambition of the disciples, and promises them a part in his kingdom, 24—30; shows Peter, that Satan desired to sift him, but that his faith should not fail; yet he would thrice deny him, 31—34; and instructs his disciples about their approaching dangers, 35—38. His agony and prayer in the garden, and his warnings to the apostles, 39—46. He is betrayed, 47—49; heals him whose ear Peter cut off, 50—53; and is led to the high priest, 54; Peter thrice denies him, but bitterly repents, 55—62. Jesus is mocked, insulted, and condemned, 63—71.

NOW ^athe feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.

2 And ^bthe chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.

3 Then ^centered Satan into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, ^dbeing of the number of the twelve.

4 And he ^ewent his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.

5 And they were glad, ^fand covenanted to give him money.

6 And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them, ^gin the absence of the multitude.

7 ¶ Then came ^hthe day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed.

8 And ^bhe sent Peter and John, saying, ⁱGo and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.

9 And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

10 And he said unto them, ^kBehold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher

b xix. 47, 48. xx. 19. Ps. li. 1—5. Matt. xxi. 38. 45, 46. xxvi. 3—5. John xii. 47—57. Acts iv. 27.

c John vii. 70, 71. xii. 6. xiii. 2, 27. Acts v. 3. d xii. 21. vi. 16. Ps. xli. 9. lv. 12—14. Matt. xxvi. 23. Mark xiv. 18—20. John xiii. 18, 26.

e Matt. xxvi. 14. Mark xiv. 10, 11.

f Zech. xi. 12, 13. Matt. xxvi. 15, 16. xxvii. 3—5. Acts i. 18. viii. 20. i Tim. vi. 9. 10. 2 Pet. ii. 3. 15. Jude ii.

g Or, without. tamul. Matt. xxvi. 5. Mark xiv. 2.

h Ex. xii. 6, 18. Matt. xxvi. 17. Mark xiv. 12.

b Mark xiv. 13—15. i. e. Matt. xii. 15. Gal. iv. 4, 5.

k xix. 29. Act. i. Sam. x. 2—7. Matt. xxvi. 18. 19. John xiv. 4. Acts vii. 26—29.

a Ex. xii. 6—26. Lev. xxi. 5, 6. Matt. xxvi. 2. Mark xiv. 1, 2. 12. John xii. 55—57. i Cor. v. 7, 8.

people; because men are apt to despise and discourage them: for man looketh at the outward appearance, but “the Lord looketh at the heart.” The spiritual mind will not be satisfied but with a city, and a temple, the foundations of which cannot be subverted, and the ornaments of which cannot be removed; foreseeing the time when “the fashion of this world will pass away.” Instead of curious inquiries and speculations, every wise man will take heed that he be not deceived, or led to countenance deceivers, in the great concerns of eternity. Whatever calamities may be in the world, or persecutions in the Church, before the end come; we are sure that it will be well with those who serve the Lord, and their very trials shall turn to them for a testimony. We should therefore “settle it in our hearts” not to be anxious about these matters, or afraid lest we should be put to shame before our enemies: for the divine Saviour will give all his disciples “a mouth and wisdom, which none of their enemies shall be able to gainsay or resist.” Whatever treachery, cruelty, contempt, or enmity we may meet with from men of all sorts, for his name's sake; nothing can in the least harm us. Let us then “possess our souls in patience,” knowing that we are hereunto called; even to suffer patiently, as well as to be unwearied in doing good.

V. 20—38.

The performance of ancient prophecies is very encouraging, whilst we are waiting on God to perform his promises: for if “the days of vengeance” arrived, that all “things which were written might be fulfilled; surely the

predictions of Zion's prosperity will also be accomplished; for our God “delighteth in mercy.” The scattered Jews around us *unwillingly* preach to us the truth of Christianity, and prove, that “though heaven and earth pass away, the words of Jesus shall not pass away;” and they may also remind us to pray for those times, when neither the literal nor the mystical Jerusalem shall any longer be trodden down by the Gentiles, and when both Jews and Gentiles shall be turned to the Lord. If we would “lift up our heads, as knowing that our redemption draweth nigh,” in those seasons, when there shall be “distress of nations” with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, men's “hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth;” or in the day when “flesh and heart shall fail;” or when “the powers of heaven shall be shaken, and the Son of man shall be seen coming in a cloud, with power and great glory;” we must continually be expecting and preparing for those events. Even Christians have cause to be warned “to take heed to themselves,” that they may not, on any occasion, be drawn into excess, or be entangled by worldly cares: otherwise, those days may come upon them unawares, which, as a snare, surprise, to their destruction, the inhabitants of the earth. May we then watch and pray incessantly, that we may be accounted worthy to escape these fatal delusions: and “that we may be found” (of Christ, when he cometh,) “in peace, without spot and blameless.” May we begin, employ, and conclude each of our days, in hearing his word, obeying his precepts, and imitating his example; that whosoever he cometh we may be found watching!

of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.

11 And ye shall say unto the good-man of the house, ¹ The Master saith unto thee, ² Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

12 And ^a he shall shew you ^a a large upper room furnished: there make ready.

13 And ^b they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

14 ^c And ^d when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

15 And he said unto them, ^e With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:

16 For I say unto you, ^f I will not any more eat thereof, ^g until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God:

17 And he ^h took the cup, ⁱ and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:

18 For I say unto you, ^j I will not drink of ^k the fruit of the vine, ^l until the kingdom of God shall come.

19 And ^m he took bread, and ⁿ gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This ^o is my body which is ^p given for you: ^q this do in remembrance of me.

20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, ^r This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

21 But, behold, ^s the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

22 And ^t truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: ^u but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

23 And they began to ^v inquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

1 xix. 21-24 Matt
xxi. 3. John 13.
24
25 xix. 5 Rev 13
20

1 John 11: 25, xxi.
17 Acts xxi 14,
15
20 Act 13 xx. 8
21 Act 13 John 13
21. 40. Heb.
xii. 8.

q Deut. xvi. 6, 7.
Matt xxi. 20.
Mark xiv. 17.

* Or, I have heart-
ily desired. xxi.
30. John 13-34
xiii. 1 xvi. 1
xix. 30.
18 29
20 xxi. 27 xix.
13 John vi 27
50-58 1 Cor. v.
7. 8. Heb. x. 1
-10.

1 Ps xliii. 5 xxi.
13 Jer. xvi. 7
19 x. 16 Deut.
viii. 10 1 Sam.
ix. 13 Rom.
xiv. 6 1 Tim.
iv. 4, 5

x 16. Matt xxvi.
29 Mark xiv.
23 av. 23.
y Judg. ix 13 Ps.
cliv. 15. Prov.
xxi. 6, 7. Cant.
v. 1. 1. xxi. 9
-11. xxi. 6 iv.
1. Zech. ix. 15.
17. Eph. v. 18,
19.
2. ix. 27 xxi. 31.
Dan. ii. 44. Mat.
xxi. 18 Mark. ii.
1. Acts 13: 30-38.
Col. 1. 13.

a Matt. xxi. 26
27 Mark xiv.
22-24 1 Cor. xi.
23-25.
b 17. 23.
c John vi. 23a 1
Theas. v. 18.
c 30 Gen. xlii. 28.
27 Ez. xxxviii.
11. Dan. 11: 38, iv.
22-24 Zech. v. 7.
8 1 Cor. x. 4.

d Gal. iv. 25
e John vi. 51
Gal. i. 4. Eph.
v. 2 1 Tim. ii. 14.
1 Pet. ii. 24
e Ps. lxxviii. 4-
6 cal. Cant.
1. 4 1 Cor. ii.
24. 25

f Ps. xiv. 9.
Zech. ii. 11. 1
Cor. x. 16-21. xi. 25. Heb. vii. 6-13. ix. 17-23. xii. 24 xiii. 20
1 Ps. xli. 9. Mic. vii. 5, 6. Matt. xxvi. 21-23. Mark xiv. 18-20. John xiii. 18. 19.
h xxi. 23-27 48. Gen. vii. 15. Ps. xxi. ix. 1. 1. Dan. ix. 24-26. Zech. xiii. 7.
i Mat. xxvi. 24 53. 54. Mark xiv. 21. Acts i. 23 iv. 26-28 xxi. 22. 23. 1 Cor.
xv. 3. 4. 1 Pet. i. 11. — 1 Ps. lv. 12-15 laix. 22-26 cix. 6-15. Matt. xvi. 5 John
xviii. 12. Acts i. 16-25 2 Pet. ii. 3. — k Matt. xxvi. 22 Mark xiv. 19 John xiii. 22
-25.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII. V. 1-13. (*Marg. Ref. Notes, Matt. xxvi. 1-5. 14-19. Mark xiv. 10-16.*) *Entered, &c.* (3.) 'God, by his wonderful providence, 'caused him to be the minister of our salvation, who 'was the author of our destruction.' (*Beza.*) *Money.* (5.) 'As the priests proposed so small a price,' (as thirty shekels,) 'to express their contempt of Jesus; so God 'permitted Judas, covetous as he was, to acquiesce in that 'mean and trifling sum;' (though he might easily have raised it higher;) 'that thus the prophecy of Zechariah 'might be fulfilled, in which it had been particularly specified.) (*Doddridge.*) *Promised.* (6.) The original word does not only signify to *confess*, or to *thank*, as some learned men have asserted, but also to *promise* and *engage*. (*Matt. xiv. 7.*) Covetous and vile as Judas was, it is hardly conceivable that he should formally *thank* the priests for the paltry sum which they stipulated to give him!

V. 14-19. (*Marg. Ref. Note, Mark xiv. 25.*) Jesus assuredly knew that this passover would bring on immediately his most intense sufferings; yet he ardently longed for its arrival, that he might enter on that conflict, which would certainly end in a glorious victory, productive of most durable and happy consequences to his people: and he desired to join with his disciples in that passover "before he suffered;" that he might more fully open his mind to them, and speak such things as would tend to prepare them also for the trials which were before them. He likewise informed them, that he should no more partake of that sacred feast, till its typical meaning was fulfilled in his atoning sacrifice, the clear revelation of his Gospel, and the establishment of his spiritual kingdom.

(*Notes, &c. Exod. xii.*) Having said this, he took the cup of wine, with which it was customary for the head of the family to begin the paschal supper; and, giving thanks for it, and the mercies then commemorated, he bade his disciples divide it among them; as he should no more drink of the fruit of the vine, till the kingdom of God should come, or the Gospel-dispensation should be introduced. It is probable, that Jesus made the same declaration, at giving the disciples the cup of wine, usually drunk in celebrating the passover, and when he gave them the cup, in instituting the Lord's supper. Perhaps he tasted the former, as a part of the *custom*, though not required by the *law*: though he did not partake of the wine used in appointing the New-Testament memorial of his death.

V. 19, 20. (*Note, Matt. xxvi. 26-29. Marg. Ref.*) — *After, &c.* (20.) 'This was said, after the paschal 'supper, to signify that this cup pertained not to the solemnity of the passover.' (*Whitby.*) The cup is here put for the wine contained in it; and that is said to be the blood of the new covenant, as representing even the blood of Emmanuel. It is astonishing, that, amidst language so undeniably figurative, one expression should have been interpreted literally, in contradiction to Scripture, to fact, and to common sense!

V. 21-23. (*Notes, Matt. xxvi. 21-23. Marg. Ref.*) *Determined.* (22.) The other evangelists say, "as it was written of him." It was *written*, because it was *determined*: but as Judas betrayed Christ, neither because it was decreed that he should, of which he could know nothing; nor because it was so written, which assuredly he did not understand or attend to at the time; so neither one nor the other interfered, in the smallest degree, with his free agency and accountableness, and con-

18. 3. x. 4. Mat.
2. 9. 10. Mark
vi. 8. 9.

Gal. 29—31 Gen
xviii. 13. Deut.
xiii. 2. 3. 16. Ps
xxiii. 1. xxviii.
9. 10. xxxviii. 3.
Mat. vi. 31—33.
3. Mat. x. 22—
25. John x. 20.
xvi. 31. 1. The
14. 15. iii. 4.
1. Pet. iv. 1.

h. 22. xviii. 31.
44—46.
Mat. xxvi. 54—
56. John x. 35.
xix. 28. 30. Acts
xiii. 27—29.
1. xxi. 32. 33. iii.
12. Mark x. 27.
2. Cor. v. 21.
Gal. iii. 13.

35 ¶ And he said unto them, * When I
sent you without purse, and scrip, and
shoes, ¹ lacked ye any thing? And they
said, Nothing.

36 Then said he unto them, ² But now,
he that hath a purse, let him take it, and
likewise *his* scrip: and he that hath no
sword, let him sell his garment, and buy
one.

37 For I say unto you, That ³ this that
is written must yet be accomplished in
me, ⁴ And he was reckoned among the
transgressors: for the things concerning
me have an end.

38 And they said, Lord, behold, here

are two swords. And he said unto them,
⁵ It is enough.

39 ¶ And ⁶ he came out, and went, ⁷ as
he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and
his disciples also followed him.

40 And when he was at the place, he
said unto them, ⁸ Pray that ye enter not
into temptation.

41 And he was withdrawn from them
about a stone's cast, ⁹ and kneeled down,
and prayed,

42 Saying, ¹⁰ Father, if thou be willing,
remove this ¹¹ cup from me: nevertheless,
¹² not my will, but thine be done.

36 John xii. 27, 28. — q. 17—20. Is. li. 17. 22. Jer. xix. 15, &c. Mat. xx. 22. John xviii.
11. — r. Ps. xli. 8. John iv. 34. v. 30. vi. 38. Heb. x. 7—10.

Mat. xxvi. 52—
54. John xviii.
36. 1. Cor. x. 3.
4. Eph. vi. 10—
16. 1. Thes. v. 6.
1. Pet. v. 9.
1. Mat. xxvi. 36—
38. Mark xiv. 32.
— 34. John xviii.
1, 2.
Mat. xxi. 37. Mark
xii. 11. 12. xiii. 3.
246. xl. 4. 1. Chr.
iv. 10. Ps. xlvii.
5. xix. 13. cxix.
116. 117.
1. Prov. xxx. 8, 9.
Mat. vi. 11.
Mark xiv. 41. Mark
xiv. 38. 2. Cor.
xii. 7—10. Eph.
vi. 18. 19. 1. Pet.
iv. 7. x. 8, 9.
Rev. iii. 10.
o. Mat. xxvi. 39.
Mark xiv. 34.
p. Mat. xxvi. 42.
44. Mark xiv.
32. John xviii.
27.

ably hoped completely to prevail against some of them, or to bring such a scandal on their characters, as might prevent their future usefulness, or grievously discourage and distress them. He wanted “to sift them as wheat;” or to agitate their minds by his inward suggestions, concurring with their outward perils and difficulties, as the wheat is tossed about in the sieve; but whatever his intentions were, the Lord meant to permit him, by these means, to prove them, and to over-rule it for the increase of their purity. Their distress and peril would indeed be very great, and they would none of them be able to sustain the shock unmoved: but Peter especially would be so violently assaulted, that, if he were left to himself, he would fall, like Judas, to rise no more. But he, who denounced the traitor's doom before his crime was perpetrated, assured Peter “he had prayed for him, that his faith “might not fail.” His faith was grievously interrupted in *its exercise and effects*, when he denied his Lord; but the *principle* failed not in his heart. The Spirit of life did not finally leave Peter, who was a believer, whose conduct on a sudden temptation was entirely contrary to his real character and his habitual purpose; though He no more strove with Judas, who was a hypocrite, and acted according to his true character, which he had hitherto concealed. Peter was speedily brought, in the *renewed exercise of faith*, to mourn for his sin, to hope in God's mercy, and to return to his service: but Judas was left to utter apostacy, despair, and suicide. When Christ had given Peter this intimation of his merciful intentions respecting him, which doubtless gave support to his faith and hope, under the anguish of his bitter remorse after he had denied his Lord, he commanded him, when thus renewedly converted, to strengthen his brethren. Accordingly, after his fall and recovery, he was peculiarly earnest in encouraging the disciples to hope for a happy event of their trials; and in animating them boldly to profess and preach the Gospel: whilst the lessons, which he learned by those events, had a very salutary effect on his own spirit, and tended to qualify him especially for encouraging and warning the tempted, the fearful, the desponding, or the fallen, even to the end of his days. The discerning reader will perceive the traces of it in his epistles. Peter, however, was not at this time prepared to attend to his Lord's warning, being confident

of his good intentions, and foolishly disposed to “trust in “his own heart.” “It is through the prayers of Christ, “that the elect do never utterly fall away from the faith.”— “He shows that faith differeth much from a vain security, in “setting before us the grievous example of Peter.” (*Beza.*)

V. 35—38. To prepare the minds of the disciples for approaching trials, our Lord reminded them of their past experience. He had sent them to preach the Gospel, without allowing them to make any provision for the journey; yet they had met with persons in every place ready to entertain and supply them. They must now, however, expect to meet with a different reception, and prepare to encounter hardship, opposition, and persecution: inasmuch that it would behoove them to take with them such provision as they had; and swords for self-defence would appear more necessary than even their garments. For all the prophecies concerning the sufferings of the Messiah were about to be accomplished in him, and to come to a speedy end in his being crucified as a malefactor: and as they would then be hated for his sake, and would shortly be sent forth to preach him, the Lord and Saviour of the world, they must prepare to be despised, persecuted, and put to death. The apostles, on hearing this, having two swords, (which were then frequently worn by travellers to defend them against the robbers,) showed them to their Lord, by way of expressing their readiness to use them, and of asking permission to go and procure more. But as he said “It is enough,” (and two swords could not be enough to arm eleven persons;) and as he showed strong disapprobation of Peter's conduct in using the sword; we are sure that he did not intend to be understood literally, but as speaking of the weapons of their spiritual warfare.— “This whole speech is allegorical. My fellow-soldiers, “you have hitherto lived in peace; but now a dreadful “war is at hand: so that, omitting all other things, you “must think only of arms. But when he prayed in the “garden, and reproved Peter for smiting with the sword, “he himself showed what those arms were.” (*Beza.*)— “You may easily guess at the reception you are like to “meet with, when you come in the name and authority of “one who has suffered as a malefactor; and yet demand “faith and obedience to him as an almighty Saviour.” (*Doddridge.*)

e Jer. 10, 11. Ps. xci. 11, 12. Mat. v. 6, 11. xxvi. 15. 1 Tim. ii. 15. Heb. i. 6. 12. 2 Cor. xii. 28. Job iv. 3, 4. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945. 946. 947. 948. 949. 950. 951. 952. 953. 954. 955. 956. 957. 958. 959. 960. 961. 962. 963. 964. 965. 966. 967. 968. 969. 970. 971. 972. 973. 974. 975. 976. 977. 978. 979. 980. 981. 982. 983. 984. 985. 986. 987. 988. 989. 990. 991. 992. 993. 994. 995. 996. 997. 998. 999. 1000.

43 And there appeared ^a an angel unto him from heaven, ^b strengthening him.

44 And ^a being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly : ^b and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them ^c sleeping for sorrow,

46 And said unto them, ^d Why sleep ye ? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

47 And ^a while he yet spake, behold, a multitude, and he that was called ^b Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.

48 But Jesus said unto him, Judas, ^c betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss ?

49 When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword ?

50 And ^a one of them smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.

51 And Jesus answered and said, ^b Suffer ye thus far. ^c And he touched his ear, and healed him.

52 Then ^a Jesus said unto the chief priests, and ^b captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves ?

53 When ^a I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands

against me : ^b but this is your hour, and ^c the power of darkness.

54 Then ^a took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. ^b And Peter followed afar off.

55 And when they ^a had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, ^b Peter sat down among them.

56 But ^a a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

57 And ^a he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

58 And after a little while, ^a another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.

59 And about the space of one hour after, another ^a confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him ; for he is a Galilean.

60 And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, ^a the cock crew.

61 And the Lord ^a turned, and ^b looked upon Peter : ^c and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, ^d Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

62 And Peter went out, ^b and wept bitterly.

16 Zech. xli. 10. Matt. v. 4. xxvi. 75. Mark. xiv. 72. 2 Cor. v. 9. 11.

V. 39—46. (Notes, Matt. xxvi. 36—46. Mark xiv. 32—42.) Pray, &c. (40.) Or, "Pray, that ye may not enter into temptation." Let this be your peculiar request, "Lead us not into temptation." Prayers are a sure succour against the most perilous assaults of our enemies. (Beza.) Angel, &c. (43.) The appearance of a holy angel to our Lord, in this conflict with the powers of darkness, and when he was weighed down with the feeling of the wrath of God against our sins, was an intimation of approaching victory. The angel could not efficaciously communicate strength, even to his human soul; but he might suggest encouraging topics : and it was doubtless a part of our Saviour's humiliation, and an instance of his condescension, that he was pleased to be thus "strengthened," by "a ministering spirit," when "all the angels of God worshipped him." Drops, &c. (44.) Learned men have adduced some instances of persons who have sweated blood : but it was always in the greatest excess of anguish or terror. Christ, by over-coming all the horrors of death, in conjunction with the curse of God for our sins, renders death friendly and lovely to us. (Beza.) (Marg. Ref.)

V. 47—53. (Notes, Matt. xxvi. 47—56. Mark xiv. 43—52. John xviii. 1—3.) Suffer, &c. (51.) Peter's rash courage seemed to render a miracle necessary for his

preservation and that of the other disciples ; but without a previous knowledge of our Lord's character, we could not have expected such a miracle as he wrought on this occasion. Desiring his furious adversaries to "suffer thus far" the zeal of his followers, in opposition to their attempt, he immediately and perfectly restored the ear of Malchus ! Yet neither this evidence of his power, nor his kindness to so officious an adversary, had any effect in softening them, or withdrawing them from their purpose !—Captains. (52.) These are supposed to have been the leaders of the priests and Levites, who alternately kept guard at the avenues of the temple. (Marg. Ref.) Hour, &c. (53.) That was the hour, in which the enemies of Christ were allowed to prevail ; because it was the very time, when Satan was to have power to "bruise the heel of the Seed of the woman," who would at length crush his head. (Note, Gen. iii. 15.)

V. 54—62. (Notes, Matt. xxvi. 57, 58. 69—75. Mark xiv. 66—72. John xviii. 15—18. 25—27.)—Man, &c. (58.) A maid challenged Peter, in the second instance, according to St. Matthew and St. Mark ; yet he here answers to a man. But Matthew writes, "She said to them that were there," and Mark, "She began to say to them that stood by." So that the maid gave the information to those around her, and some man charged

63 ¶ And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him.
 64 And when they had blind-folded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, Who is it that smote thee?
 65 And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.
 66 ¶ And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people, and the chief priests, and the scribes, came together, and led him into their council, saying,
 67 Art thou the Christ? tell us.

And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe:

68 And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor tell me go.

69 Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.

70 Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am.

71 And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.

Peter with it. Perhaps several joined, though he answered to one in particular, for St. John writes, "They said unto him, &c." *Looked.* (61.) 'What effect that look must have had on the heart and on the countenance of Peter, every one may, perhaps in some degree, perceive; but it is utterly impossible for any words to describe, or I believe, for the pencil of a Guido to express. The sacred writer, therefore, judiciously makes no attempt to work upon our passions, or our feelings, by any display of eloquence on the occasion: he simply relates the fact, without any embellishment or amplification.' (*Bp. Porteus.*)

V. 63—65. (*Notes.* Matt. xxvi. 67, 68. Mark xiv. 65.) 'It is probable, that some insults preceded, and others, yet more violent, followed, his being solemnly condemned by the Sanhedrim as guilty of death.' 'They charged Jesus with blasphemy, in asserting himself to be the Son of God; but the Evangelist fixes this charge on them, because he really was so.' (*Doddridge.*) (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 66—71. (*Notes.* Matt. xxvi. 59—66. xxvii. 1, 2. Mark xiv. 55—64.) From the narrative of the two preceding Evangelists, it appears, that after the council had condemned Jesus, they separated, and met again early in the morning; and the words here used, 'As soon as it was day,' &c.; seem to refer to this latter meeting of the council. Nor is it improbable, that the high-priest again put the same questions to our Lord, as he had done the night before; both to see whether he would stand to what he had said; and that such members of the council, as had been absent, might hear his answers. *Ask, &c.* (68.) That is, 'If I demand a reason of your unbelief, or require you to set me at liberty.' (*Marg. Ref.*) *Art thou.* (70.) What Christ said of himself and his exaltation, as the Son of man, being understood as a declaration that he was the promised Messiah, occasioned the rulers to inquire whether he was "the Son of God?" by which it appears that they expected that the Messiah would be the Son of God; for they charged him with blasphemy, because they would not allow that he was the Messiah. But it is not clear what ideas they annexed to the words, "The Son of God."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—23.

When sinners have long sinned against conviction under

the means of grace, and listened to temptation, Satan is often permitted to take full possession, and to hurry them into such crimes as bring on them swift destruction. This is more likely to be the doom of hypocritical preachers of the Gospel, than of any other persons; nor will eminence of rank, gifts, or abilities, in the least preserve them from it. The avarice of false friends sometimes concurs with the malice of open enemies, in contriving plans of persecution, and in getting over the obstacles which they meet with from the fear of man; and they are very glad of each other's assistance. The faithful followers of the Lamb may, however, confidently commit their cause to "Him who judgeth righteously;" and, after the example of their Lord, they should attend on the ordinances of God in due season; assured that no plots of their enemies can accomplish more than "was before determined," with a view to the glory of God, and the salvation of their souls. If then the Redeemer desired the approach of his last more tremendous sufferings, that he might furnish an everlasting feast for our souls by his body broken and his blood poured out for us, with what patience and cheerfulness should we meet those lighter trials, through which we are to follow him to his kingdom above! We should therefore continually remember his love, his sufferings, and our obligations to him, both in that ordinance which he hath appointed, and by our daily meditation on his word; that we may feel the constraining influence of love to him, who died for us, to purchase the blessings of the New Testament, which he sealed with his blood. Let us then only beware of hypocrisy; and though the hand of traitors should be with us, either at his table, or our own, we shall be free from their wo, and be able to appeal to the Lord, and confide in him with conscious integrity.

V. 24—34.

How unbecoming is carnal ambition in a follower of Jesus, who took upon him the form of a servant, and humbled himself even to the death upon the cross! Let us leave it to those rulers of this world, who know not God, to lust after dominion, and to retain flatterers who may compliment them as *benefactors*; whilst their mad ambition fills nations with blood and misery. It is our part to do good by stooping and labouring, and to become *benefactors* indeed, by being servants to all men for Christ's sake, and after his example: nor is any one allowed to aspire after other pre-eminence in his kingdom, than what springs

CHAP. XXIII.

Jesus is accused before Pilate, who sends him to Herod, 1—7. He is silent before Herod, who mocks him and sends him back, 8—11. Pilate and Herod are made friends, 12. Pilate, convinced of the innocence of Jesus, is yet prevailed on by clamour to give him up to crucifixion, and to release Barabbas, 13—25. Jesus is led away, Simon of Cyrene bearing his cross, 26. To the women, &c. who bewailed him, he predicts the calamities coming on the Jews, 27—31. He is crucified between two thieves, and prays for his murderers, 32—34. The people, rulers, priests, and soldiers, and

one of the thieves, scoff at him, 35—38. The other thief rebukes his companion and confesses Christ, who promises that he shall that day be with him in paradise, 39—43. The land is darkened, the veil of the temple rent, and Jesus, commending his spirit into the hand of his Father, expires, 44—46. The centurion confesses him, and the people with his acquaintance retire, smiting their breasts at what they had seen, 47—49. Joseph of Aramathea asks for the body, and buries it, 50—54. The women prepare spice; but rest on the sabbath, according to the commandment, 55, 56.

from greater humility, diligence, and usefulness. Thus following Christ in his temptations, we too shall obtain a kingdom, even as he hath been exalted to his mediatorial throne; and though we may not have all the distinguished honour of the holy apostles, yet we shall be admitted to a fulness of joy and a weight of glory, of which we at present can form no adequate conception. But in the way to this felicity, we must expect to be assaulted and sifted by Satan: if he cannot destroy us, he will endeavour to disgrace, to pollute, or to distress us; and the Lord may see good to permit him to harass us grievously, and even to baffle us in some painful conflicts, that he may the more prove, humble, and sanctify us; and that he may show the power of his grace in making us at length more than conquerors. It is not owing to our own wisdom and strength, if we are not finally overcome; but to the intercession of our heavenly Advocate, who prayeth "for his people, as he doth not for the world;" therefore "their faith doth not fail;" though it seem to be dead, it revives again: "though they fall, they are not utterly cast down," for they again look to the Lord, and he restores their souls. If we have any acquaintance with this conflict, and have been recovered, and, as it were, converted again, after having been foiled by temptation, we shall both be qualified and disposed to strengthen our brethren, to caution and encourage them for the combat, to address the weak and tempted with tenderness and compassion, and to restore, in the spirit of meekness, such as have been overtaken in a fault. But nothing so certainly forebodes a fall, in a professed disciple of Christ, as self-confidence, connected with disregard to warnings and contempt of danger. It may accord with our intentions to say, "I am ready to go with thee to prison, or to death;" but it is not so easy to stand our ground in the hour of temptation; and unless we watch and pray always, we may be drawn into those things in the course of the day, which in the morning we were the most resolved against.

V. 35—46.

Our experience of the Lord's faithfulness and goodness in times past, should animate us to trust both his providence and grace for the future; for many of us must say to his

praise, that when at his word we neglected ordinary methods of obtaining temporal provisions, we in the event have wanted nothing. Yet we should not so presume on his care, as to rush ourselves needlessly into danger; and we may expect, that as our faith is strengthened, it will be more sharply tried than heretofore. We should then be continually preparing and arming for the battle, that we may be able to stand in the evil day of sharp temptation; and we shall find, that a believing acquaintance with the word of God, that sword of the Spirit, will be more needful for us, in our passage through the enemy's country, than even our ordinary raiment. We cannot expect to escape tribulation and ill usage, in a world which numbered the Lord of glory with the vilest transgressors, if we indeed profess his truth and obey his commandments; but if we pray fervently, that we may not enter into temptation, we shall either be preserved from the severer trials, or be enabled under them to say, "Not my will, but thine, be done." And surely, when we contemplate the Redeemer in an agony, praying more earnestly, and "his sweat, like great drops of blood, falling down to the ground," whilst he was bruised for our iniquities; we shall pray also to be enabled "to resist unto blood, striving against sin," if we should ever be called to it.

V. 47—71.

As our supineness often exposes us to rebukes and chastenings, so our intemperate zeal on some occasions betrays us into dishonourable mistakes, even as our timidity does on others; for corrupt nature still counteracts the tendency of grace, and warps our conduct to some extreme; we should therefore ask, and wait for, the Lord's directions, before we act in difficult circumstances. He will, however, prevent the most fatal consequences of our errors, provided our hearts be upright; yet when we contrast his temper and conduct with our own, we shall always see much to admire and much to be ashamed of. Neither the displays of his power, nor those of his love, can intimidate or soften hardened unbelievers; for such men could treat the divine Saviour as if he had been a thief or a robber, even when he was working his gracious miracles before their eyes, or healing their wounds! But their hour, and

^a **AND** ^a the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.

² And ^b they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow ^c perverting the nation, ^d and forbidding to give tribute to Cesar, saying, ^e That he himself is Christ a king.

³ And ^f Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou ^g the king of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it.

⁴ Then said Pilate to the chief priests, and to the people, ^h I find no fault in this man.

⁵ And ⁱ they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, ^j beginning from Galilee to this place.

⁶ When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were ^k a Galilean.

⁷ And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto ^l Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.

⁸ And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: ^m for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; ⁿ and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.

⁹ Then he questioned with him in many words; ^o but he answered him nothing.

¹⁰ And the chief priests and scribes stood ^p and vehemently accused him.

¹¹ And ^q Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

¹² And the same day ^r Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for

that of the power of darkness, were of short continuance; and such will always be the triumphing of the wicked.—To whatever part of the scene before us we turn our thoughts, we will see proofs of the Redeemer's excellency, and of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the human heart; but especially let us contemplate him, amidst all the insults and cruelties which he meekly endured, looking with compassion on his fallen disciple; that we too may be excited to call our own sins to remembrance, and to renew "that godly sorrow, which worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of."

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII. V. 1—5. (Notes, Matt. xxvii. 1, 2, 11—14. Mark xv. 1—5. John xviii. 28—40.) The beginning of this chapter favours the opinion before given, (Note, xxii. 66—71,) that the assembling of the council in the morning, and an examination of Jesus before them, on the same things which had been inquired of during the preceding night, was intended in these verses. The rulers were determined, if possible, to induce Pilate to put Jesus to death: it was therefore necessary for them to accuse him of some crime against the Roman government. Accordingly, they said nothing at first of his confessing himself to be the Son of God; but spake of him in the most disdainful language, as one, whom they had found perverting the nation, not only in their religious principles, but also in respect of their subjection to the Roman authority; and, notwithstanding his unexceptionable answer a few days before, they directly accused him of forbidding the people to pay tribute to Cesar! (Marg. Ref.) This shows with what intent they had proposed to him that insidious question, and to what difficulties his answer had reduced them. They were, however, determined to draw this conclusion from his claim to be the Messiah the king of the Jews, though in direct contradiction to his own express determination. But though Pilate found from Jesus himself, that he was "the King

of the Jews;" yet he declared that he was perfectly satisfied concerning his innocency, as to the charges brought against him. This rendered his accusers still more furious and eager in their prosecution, fearing a disappointment and being enraged at the insinuation that they were seeking the death of an innocent man. They therefore further charged him with having stirred up the people to revolt, by his preaching, throughout all the land; for he had begun in Galilee, and had proceeded with a multitude of followers till he arrived at Jerusalem. Probably they referred to his public entrance into the city a few days before, to which Pilate could not be a stranger; and to his teaching in the temple in contempt of their authority. Certain impostors had indeed before this arisen in Galilee; and there, collecting followers and exciting insurrections, had given the Romans considerable trouble; for which cause the rulers probably supposed Pilate would have been the more jealous of Jesus, (Note, xiii. 1, 2;) but that governor well understood the difference between armed forces, and our Lord's inoffensive followers; who were formidable to nothing but the hypocrisy and ambition of the scribes, priests, and Pharisees.

V. 6—12. Pilate would gladly have declined this business, in which his judgment and his apparent interest were likely to interfere with each other. When therefore he learned, that Jesus had lived in the district which Herod governed, he immediately sent him and his accusers to that prince, who was then at Jerusalem, perhaps on account of the passover. Herod was rejoiced to see Jesus, perhaps desiring to satisfy himself whether he were indeed John Baptist risen from the dead, as he had once supposed. He had, however, long wished to see him, (having heard many reports concerning his doctrine and miracles,) in hopes of having his curiosity gratified by beholding some effects of his extraordinary power. But our Lord saw good to keep a profound silence in his presence, not returning any answer, either to his multiplied questions, or to the vehement

accusations which he heard him make against him.

Herod, who was then at Jerusalem, perhaps on account of the passover, was rejoiced to see Jesus, perhaps desiring to satisfy himself whether he were indeed John Baptist risen from the dead, as he had once supposed.

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Herod was rejoiced to see Jesus, perhaps desiring to satisfy himself whether he were indeed John Baptist risen from the dead, as he had once supposed.

before they were at enmity between themselves.

13 ¶ And ^u Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, and the rulers, and the people,

14 Said unto them, ^a as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined ^{him} before you, ^v have found no fault in this man, touching those things whereof ye accuse him;

15 No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him:

16 I will therefore ^z chastise him, and release ^{him}.

17 (For ^a of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)

18 And ^b they cried out all at once, saying, ^c Away with this ^{man}, and release unto us Barabbas:

19 (Who for a certain ^d sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison:)

20 Pilate therefore ^e willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.

21 But they cried, saying, ^f Crucify ^{him}, crucify him.

22 And he said unto them the third time, ^g Why, what evil hath he done?

I have found no cause of death in him: ^h I

will therefore chastise him, and let ^{him} go.

23 And they were ⁱ instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified: and the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.

24 And ^k Pilate ^{gave} sentence, that it should be as they required.

25 And he released unto them him that ^l for sedition and murder was cast into prison, ^m whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

26 ¶ And as they led him away, ⁿ they laid hold upon one Simon, ^p a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, ^q that he might bear ^{it} after Jesus.

27 And there followed him a great company of people, ^r and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.

28 But Jesus, turning unto them, said, ^s Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

29 For, behold, ^t the days are coming, in the which they shall say, ^u Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.

30 Then shall they ^x begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

^u Matt. xxvii. 21
—23. Mark xv.
14. John xviii.
39. xix. 4.

^x 1, 2, 5.

^v 4. Dan. vi. 4.
Matt. xxvii. 4
19. 24. 54. Acts
xiii. 28. Heb.
vii. 26.

^z Matt. xxvii.
26. Mark xv. 15.
John xix. 1—4.
Acts v. 40. 41.

^a Matt. xxvii.
15. Mark xv. 6.
John xix. 39.

^b Matt. xxvii.
16—18. 20—23.
Mark xv. 7—14.
John xviii. 40.

^c John xix. 12.
Acts xxi. 36.
xxii. 22.

^d 2. 5.

^e Matt. xiv. 8, 9.
xxvii. 19. Mark
xv. 15. John
xix. 12.

^f Matt. xxvii.
22—25. Mark
xv. 12, 14. John
xix. 13.

^g 14, 20. 1 Pet. i.
19. iii. 18.

^h 16.

ⁱ 5. Ps. xxii. 12,
13. lvi. 4. Zech.
xi. 8.

^k Matt. xxvii.
26. Mark xv. 15.
John xix. 16.

^l Or, ascended.
Ez. xxiii. 2.
Prov. xvii. 15.

^m 1, 2, 5. Mark xv.
7. John xviii. 40.
1 Sam. xii. 13.
Mark xv. 6.
Acts iii. 14.

ⁿ Matt. xxvii. 26.
Mark xv. 15.
^o Matt. xxvii.
32. Mark xv. 21.
John xix. 16.

^p Acts ii. 10
vl. 9. xiii. 1.
q ix. 23. xiv. 27.

^r 55. viii. 2. Mat.
xxvii. 55, 56.
Mark xv. 40.

^s Cant. i. 5. ii. 7
iii. 5. 10. v. 8
16. vii. 4.

^t xxi. 23, 24.
Matt. xxiv. 19.
Mark xxi. 17—
19.

^u Deut. xxviii. 53
—57. Hos. ix.
12—16. xiii. 16.

^x Is. ii. 19. Hos.
x. 8. Rev. vi. 16.
ix. 5.

accusations of his enemies: so that Herod was entirely disappointed, and did not choose to have any hand in putting him to death, (having probably been greatly terrified on account of his murder of John Baptist.) He therefore contented himself with treating Jesus as a despicable person beneath his notice, except that he joined with his guards in deriding and insulting him. In token of their contempt of his pretensions to be a king, they clothed him with some splendid garment, which had perhaps been worn by Herod; and he was sent back thus attired to Pilate, that he might dispose of him as he pleased. Probably, the Roman soldiers took the hint from this insult of Herod and his guard, to clothe Jesus with a purple robe, and to put on him a crown of thorns. As Pilate and Herod, the one a Roman, the other a proselyted Jew, and both very wicked men, governed adjacent regions, we need not wonder that they were jealous of each other, and that causes of enmity arose betwixt them. The mutual respect, however, shown on this occasion, and their agreement with each other in treating Jesus with scornful disregard, brought about a reconciliation. 'This Herod, was son to Herod the great, under whom Christ was born; and uncle to Herod Agrippa, by whom James was beheaded and Peter imprisoned, who was eaten by worms; and great uncle to that Agrippa, who by Paul's discourse was almost persuaded to be a Christian.'—

'Christ's arraignment before him, when he was sent back und condemned, was a great additional proof of the falsehood of those accusations, which the Jews had brought against him as a seditious person, and particularly as one who had stirred up the people in Galilee.' (Doddridge.)

V. 13—25. (Notes, Matt. xxvii. 15—26. Mark xv. 6—15. John xviii. 38—40. xix. 6—16. Unto, &c. (15.) Or, by him. Pilate could not mean, that any thing Herod might have done to Jesus would have been "worthy of death;" but that Herod's conduct proved that he thought nothing worthy of death had been committed by Jesus. Herod's concurrence with Pilate in this judgment seemed of great weight, as Herod was well acquainted with the customs and religion of the Jews. Pilate purposed therefore to chastise him, in order that he might be deterred from using such expressions as had given umbrage; and then to release him, according to the custom of the feast; which might render that measure less offensive to the Jewish rulers, as implying that he deserved punishment, but was set at liberty by an act of grace. Whom, &c. (25.) The decided preference given by the rulers to one who had actually excited sedition, as well as committed murder, was a clear demonstration of their malice against Jesus; and showed that *this* was indeed their real motive, and not any regard to the Roman authority. (Marg. Ref.)

y. Rev. x. 11. Jer.

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31 For if they do these things * in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

32 And ² there were also two other malefactors, led with him to be put to death.

33 And ³ when they were come to the place which is called * Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors: one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

34 Then said Jesus, * Father, forgive them; for ⁴ they know not what they do.

And they parted his raiment and cast lots.

35 And ⁵ the people stood beholding: and the rulers also with them ⁶ deriding him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be ⁷ Christ, the chosen of God.

36 And the soldiers also ⁸ mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,

37 And saying, If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself.

38 And ⁹ a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39 And ¹ one of the malefactors, which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself, and us.

40 But the other answering, ² rebuked him, saying, ³ Dost not thou fear God, ⁴ seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

41 And ⁵ we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: ⁶ but this man hath done nothing amiss.

42 And he said unto Jesus, ⁷ Lord, remember me ⁸ when thou comest into thy kingdom.

43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, ⁹ To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

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50 And he said unto Jesus, ⁷ Lord, remember me ⁸ when thou comest into thy kingdom.

51 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, ⁹ To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

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57 And ⁵ we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: ⁶ but this man hath done nothing amiss.

58 And he said unto Jesus, ⁷ Lord, remember me ⁸ when thou comest into thy kingdom.

59 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, ⁹ To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

V. 26—31. Though the multitude of the Jews had been instigated to demand the crucifixion of Jesus; yet there were many individuals, who had a sincere regard for him. A great company of these, especially many women, followed him when led away to be crucified, expressing their concern by doleful lamentations: but he called on them to mourn for themselves, and their posterity, rather than for him; as he went to his sufferings most willingly, being assured of a speedy joyful event, and most glorious effects from that: whereas vengeance, beyond example terrible, would shortly come on their city and nation, for the enormous wickedness about to be perpetrated. For the days were at hand, when those women would generally be counted most happy, who never had any children; as parents would see their offspring butchered or enslaved, or dying by famine or pestilence; nay, some mothers would even be driven by extreme hunger to eat their own infants. (Notes, &c. Matt. xxiv. 19.) Then the Jews, who now clamorously demanded his crucifixion, would *begin* to call on the mountains to hide or crush them, that they might escape the lingering miseries to which that crime would expose them. This intimated the long duration of their national calamities, and that more dreadful vengeance awaited individuals in another world; they would then *begin* to call on the mountains, &c. but they would not speedily cease to do so. (Marg. Ref.) For if the Romans, at their instigation and by the permission of God, inflicted so terrible a punishment on him, whose conduct had been holy, inoffensive, and excellent, what would they, as the executioners of God's vengeance, do to that nation, when they had filled up the measure of their iniquities, and when the turbulent conduct, repeated insurrections, and obstinate resistance of the Jews, had determined the Romans to destroy them without mercy? If such a fire were kindled in a green tree, that was altogether unfit for fuel, what would

be the case in respect of the dry wood, which was every way ready for the flames?

V. 32—38. (Notes, Matt. xxvii. 27—44. Mark xv. 16—32. John xix. 16—24.) *Forgive, &c.* (34.) This prayer seems to have been made at the very time, when the soldiers were employed in nailing our Lord's hands and feet to the cross. In the extremity of his anguish, and the contumelious cruelty with which he was treated, he seems to have been more concerned for the sin of his murderers, than for his own sufferings. The soldiers, who crucified him, were primarily intended: as Romans, "they knew not what they were doing;" and their guilt was far less heinous than that of the chief priests, or that of the people who had enjoyed fuller means of instruction. Instead of complaints or threats, our Lord only uttered an extenuation of the guilt of his cruel executioners, and a prayer for their forgiveness! In this he acted as our perfect example; yet doubtless his intercession prevailed for those whom he especially intended. Probably the soldiers concerned were afterwards converted and saved. (Note, Matt. xxvii. 54.) Many of the surrounding multitude also, who had demanded his crucifixion, "not knowing what they did," were doubtless saved in answer to his prayer; and, in some sense, it may be applied to every one who is justified by faith in his blood. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 39—43. The language of the other evangelists hath led many to conclude that both the malefactors, at first, concurred in reviling our Lord: but others think that it cannot be inferred from their words; and in itself it is indeed improbable, especially as the penitent thief neither confessed his own guilt in *this particular*, nor assigned any reason for so suddenly altering his opinion, when he rebuked his fellow-sufferer. Doubtless he who was saved had spent a very wicked life, and there is no proof that he was at all penitent, even when nailed to the cross; though

2 Matt. xxvii. 45. 44 ¶ And ² it was about the sixth hour, and ^a there was darkness over
 Mark xv 33
 a Rev x 21-23
 b 1 Cor xxi 10-12
 c 2 Cor 10. 10
 d 31 Am v 18. viii. 9 Hab iii. 8-11. Acts ii. 20.

his awful situation might possibly have produced some serious reflections in his mind. The most of what he had previously heard of Christ must have been from his enemies: but as he was a Jew, he probably had some general knowledge of the prophecies concerning the Messiah, and he might have heard some reports concerning our Lord's doctrine and miracles. Knowing therefore on what account he was condemned, and witnessing his extraordinary meekness and patience under his sufferings, and his prayers for his murderers, he seems to have been led, under the immediate teaching of the Holy Spirit, to believe that he was the promised Messiah, the Son of God, and the King of Israel; and perhaps to understand that he was to be a suffering Redeemer, and be "led as a lamb to the slaughter." Under this conviction he first rebuked his fellow-sufferer for reviling Jesus, and demanded of him, whether "he did not fear God?" As to this life, neither of them could have any thing more to fear than they were actually suffering: this therefore implied a realizing belief of a future state, and of the cause which his fellow-sufferer had to fear the wrath of God for his crimes in another world, so that he ought to have been employed in confessing his guilt, and in crying for mercy, and not in reviling an innocent person who suffered with him. In respect of them, he acknowledged the punishment to be deserved both from God and man; they were indeed "receiving the due reward of their deeds:" but Jesus had "done nothing amiss," or out of its place. Thus he expressly declared his assurance of our Lord's innocence, as to those things of which he was accused by the Jews, and in his whole conduct; and that he was indeed the Son of God, the King of Israel, who would hereafter sit on the right hand of the throne of God. Thus fearing God, and being conscious that he deserved his wrath and eternal condemnation: and believing Jesus to be "the Christ the Son of the living God," though now about to expire on the cross, and that he certainly would possess the promised kingdom, and have the disposal of eternal life and salvation, he humbly besought him to "remember him, when he came into his kingdom." He had nothing further to fear or to hope in respect of this world; he did not expect Christ to save himself or them in that sense: but he was taught by the Holy Spirit to discern something of the true nature of "the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.) He knew himself to be unworthy of Christ's regard, or of the spiritual and eternal blessings which he had to bestow: yet he earnestly desired to be remembered by him, according to the riches of his mercy; and he evidently "trusted in Christ" for deliverance from the wrath to come, and for eternal happiness, whatever his views were about the design of his death, or whether he expected that he would rise immediately from the dead or not. He was humbled in true repentance; he believed on Jesus in his heart unto righteousness, and he made confession of him with his mouth unto salvation; he was decided in this confession of Christ as the Messiah the King of Israel, when all around were deriding and reviling him; and when even his own disciples dared not to acknowledge themselves, and were stumbled in respect of his promised redemption and his

all the * earth until the ninth hour. ^a Or, 'and.
 45 And the sun was darkened, ^b and
 14. Matt xxvii. 51 Mark xv. 38. Eph. ii 14-18 Heb vi. 19. ix 3-8. x. 19-22

kingdom. He brought forth all the fruits meet for repentance, which his circumstances could admit of; he showed holy fear of God, humbly confessing his guilt, and thus glorifying him, by submitting patiently to his excruciating sufferings; he exercised faith and hope in Christ, love to his name and zeal to his honour; and he showed his love to the soul of his fellow-sufferer, and hatred of his sin, by his faithful reproof, and reasonable expostulation with him. Here was evidently the substance of all Christian graces, which would have been expanded into all the actions of a holy life, had time been allowed. Perhaps he actually more honoured Christ in this short space, than many do who live a number of years to profess faith in him: and in short here were evidently both the title to, and the meetness for, the inheritance of the saints in light. Our Lord, therefore, without delay, and in the most solemn manner, assured him, that "on that very day he should be with him in paradise." That day was then spending apace, and many crucified persons used to hang longer on the cross, than from the time when they were suspended till the close of it: but our Lord predicted both his own death, and that of the penitent thief, before the setting of the sun; and their immediate entrance into a state of happiness. The first Adam lost paradise by his sin; the second Adam regained it by his obedience unto death, or rather obtained for us a state of far superior felicity in heaven: into this felicity believers are admitted immediately after their death; and this gracious promise would be an exhilarating cordial to the heart of the dying penitent, to support him during the remainder of his agonies, which soon terminated in unspeakable joys. This was doubtless intended as the grand display of the Redeemer's power and grace, in the view of numberless invisible spectators: and for the instruction of mankind in all future ages about those things, which relate to the freedom and sovereignty of his mercy, the efficacy of his atoning blood, and the omnipotency of his saving arm. Thus he triumphed over Satan upon the cross, and delivered the prey from the very jaws of that devouring lion, even in the crisis of his deepest humiliation. Thus he communicated life, when he was in the very agonies of death; and he dispensed pardons and disposed of kingdoms, as from a glorious throne, even whilst hanging on the tree as a slave and a malefactor! But it is a single instance in Scripture, an act of grace well suited to honour the extraordinary occasion. It should indeed teach us to despair of none, and that none should despair of themselves; yet, lest it should be abused, it was contrasted with the awful case of the other thief, who died hardened in unbelief with a crucified Saviour before his eyes, as a warning to presuming sinners, that in general men die as they live. The case of the penitent thief was extraordinary in all its circumstances: yet Jesus is still able to save to the uttermost all them that call upon him, in their latest extremity. But such a single instance can give no encouragement to those who sin on under the means of grace, and against the convictions of their own consciences, from presumptuous expectation of a death-bed repentance; and, if possible, it is still more absurd for men to adduce this instance, in proof of their licentious views of salvation

the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

46 And when Jesus had cried ^c with a loud voice, he said, ^d Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and, ^e having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

47 Now when the centurion saw what was done, ^f he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.

48 And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, ^g smote their breasts, and returned.

49 And all his ^h acquaintance, and ⁱ the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

50 ¶ And, behold, ^j there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor: and he was a good man, and a just:

51 (The same ^k had not consented to

the counsel and deed of them: ^l he was of ^m Arimathea, a city of the Jews; who ⁿ also himself ^o waited for the kingdom of God.

52 This man ^p went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.

53 And he took it down, ^q and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.

54 And that day was ^r the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.

55 And ^s the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.

56 And they returned, ^t and prepared spices and ointments: ^u and rested the sabbath-day, according to the commandment.

by faith alone, to the disparagement of holiness, and of good works, as the necessary fruits of saving faith; when this man's faith was connected with real sanctification, and productive of good works, as far as ever the case could possibly admit of them. 'This thief improved his time at last, in that extraordinary manner, as perhaps no man ever did before, or will do hereafter. He then believed Christ to be the Saviour of the world, when one of his disciples had betrayed him, another had denied him, and all of them had forsook him! to be the Son of God, the Lord of life, when he was hanging on the cross, suffering the pangs of death, and seemingly deserted by his Father! he proclaims him the Lord of paradise, when all the Jews condemned him, and the Gentiles crucified him as an impostor, and a malefactor! He feared God, acknowledged the justice of his punishment, and did with patience submit to it. He condemned himself, and justified the holy Jesus, declaring that "he had done nothing amiss." He was solicitous, not for the preservation of his body, but the salvation of his soul; not only for his own, but the salvation of his brother-thief, whom he so charitably reprehends, so earnestly requests not to proceed in his blasphemous language, so lovingly inviteth to the fear of God. So that the glory which he did to Christ, by his faith and piety upon the cross, seems such as the whole series of a pious life in other men can hardly parallel.' (Whitby.)

V. 44—49. (Notes, Matt. xxvii. 45—56. Mark xv. 33—41. John xix. 25—37.) Father, &c. (46.) (Notes, Ps. xxxi. 5. Acts vii. 53, 60.) Our Lord had just before cried out with a loud voice, saying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" After that, it is probable, he said "I thirst:" then, "It is finished;" and finally, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." (Marg. Ref.) A righteous, &c. (47.) That is, This person was unjustly put to death, for saying that he was the Son of God; for "Truly this was the Son of God." All, &c. (48.) Doubtless many of those, who had been

prompted to demand Christ's crucifixion, were deeply affected by his behaviour on the cross, and by the prodigies attending his death; and we may suppose that their remorse and sorrow, for their concurrence in his death, might prepare the way for their believing the Gospel, when preached by the apostles at and after the day of Pentecost. But the chief priests, Scribes, and rulers, seem to have felt neither remorse nor sorrow on the occasion!

V. 50—56. (Notes, Matt. xxvii. 57—60. Mark xv. 42—47. John xix. 31—42.) The same, &c. (51.) Probably Joseph absented himself from the council, when he found his dissent had no effect.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—12.

Envy, malice, cruelty, and calumny, are combined in the character of "the seed of the serpent," who hate and persecute "the Seed of the woman;" and they seldom are perverse to charge their own crimes on those who are most evidently innocent of them! No prudence or harmlessness, in word or deed, can secure a man from their enmity and slander; yet an unexceptionable conduct may drive them into such egregious absurdities and palpable falsehoods, as shall serve to expose their own malignity. When wicked men are determined to accomplish their vile purposes, every check renders them more impetuous, and every intimation that they are acting wrong is considered as an intolerable affront. The Lord, however, conducts all his great designs to a glorious event, by means of those who are following the evil devices of their own hearts; even as all parties concurred in proving the immaculate innocence of Jesus, the atoning Sacrifice for our sins. Even very wicked men have some reserves in iniquity. There are lengths to which they are reluctant to proceed, especially without what appears to them an adequate advantage: yet whilst they are restrained by inward terror from some crimes, they are kept from such actions as they cannot but approve, by fear of their fellow-creatures, and even of

CHAP. XXIV.

Two angels inform the women at the sepulchre, that Jesus is risen, 1—8. They report it to the others, but are not believed, 9—11. Peter goes to the sepulchre, 12. Jesus appears, as a stranger, to two disciples when going to Emmaus; converses with them, explains the Scriptures, and then discovers himself, 13—32. They return, and report it to the eleven, who inform them that Jesus had appeared to Simon, 33—35.

their inferiors! But profligate professors of true religion are commonly more hardened than open idolaters; and they are entitled to less regard from us. Herod desired to see Jesus, and to witness his miracles, from worthless motives: but our Lord would take no notice of a man, who had committed such enormous wickedness, in opposition to the convictions of his own conscience. How careful then should every one be, not to provoke God to give him up to final infatuation and insensibility! He, who had revered John Baptist, knowing him to be a holy man, and yet at length had beheaded him, was left to treat the divine Saviour with the utmost contempt, and to join with his brutal soldiers in deriding and insulting Him, to whom John came to bear witness! We may also observe, that as the enmities of wicked men are often excited about the veriest trifles, so their friendships are grounded on, or cemented by, the basest combinations in wickedness; or they spring from coincidence in vicious dispositions and pursuits. Frequently they agree in little, except in enmity against God, and contempt of Christ and his cause: death therefore will soon terminate their amity, and perfect hatred in every sense will be their final temper and portion.

V. 13—31.

We must not here again particularly dwell on that display of man's depravity, and of the justice and mercy of God; the meekness, patience, fortitude, and love of the divine Saviour; the evil of sin, the misery of unbelievers, the felicity of true disciples, which the cross of Christ continually suggests to us. Let us however remark, that no man will in all circumstances be constant to the dictates of his judgment and conscience, who is not actuated by the fear of God and faith in his word; that they, who from carnal motives are prevailed on to sanction iniquity by their authority and influence, will by no means be held guiltless; that wicked men, who reject Christ for the sake of their destructive lusts, will have what they desired, and will have none to blame but themselves for their perverse choice; that many are transiently affected by the recital of the sufferings of Christ, who have no true faith in him or love to him; that sinners have cause to weep incessantly for the calamities, which are coming upon them from the wrath of an offended God; and that it is better to remain childless, than to bring up children to be heirs of wrath and misery. How should we then use every means, and especially beseech the Lord, continually, for our offspring, that what

He joins the company; shows them his hands and his side, and eats with them, 36—43. He reminds them of his words, opens their understandings, interprets the Scriptures, and commissions them to preach his Gospel to the nations, beginning at Jerusalem, 44—48. He promises the Holy Spirit, leads them forth to Bethany, blesses them and ascends into heaven, 49—51. They worship him with joy, and praise God at the temple continually, 52, 53.

ever their lot may be in this life, they may be 'numbered with the saints in glory everlasting!' At the approach of the miseries reserved hereafter for the unbelieving and disobedient, the stoutest despisers will begin to call on the mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the wrath of their offended Judge: yet this refuge will be denied to those, that now refuse to flee for refuge to the gracious Saviour; and even his sufferings may now preach terror to obstinate transgressors; for if "these things were done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

V. 32—43.

Who can sufficiently admire the Redeemer's compassionate prayer and plea for his cruel and insulting murderers! May that prayer be heard for our souls; for we also, when living in sin, concurred with those who crucified him, though we knew not what we did. But let every reader fear "crucifying him afresh," now he knows better, by continuing in sin, in contempt of his salvation. We should also meditate on this subject frequently; that we may learn to "forgive our enemies, to bless those who curse us, and to pray for them who despitefully use us and persecute us;" that we may be induced to persist in doing good, amidst all the obloquy, outrage, and cruelty to which we can be exposed; and that we may be shamed out of our resentments and aversions, which are generally excited by very trivial provocations. Whilst the Lord refuses the presumptuous demands of proud Scribes and Pharisees, and leaves insulting scornors to be hardened in their prejudices, for the honour of his wisdom and justice, he shows that this conduct does not arise from any want either of power or love, by snatching others as brands from the burning, to the praise of the glory of his sovereign grace. When he pleases he can at once enlighten the darkest mind, and soften the hardest, humble the proudest, and cleanse the most polluted heart; and thus plant holy fear, repentance, faith, love, and every heavenly affection, in that breast, which before was occupied by the vilest abominations! But if he saves from wrath, he also saves from sin: and the change of nature is the evidence of the happy change that has taken place in the state of pardoned sinners. Such monuments of mercy will then become reprovers or counsellors to their former companions in iniquity; they will justify God in their sharpest sufferings, and glorify him by ingenuous confessions of their guilt; they will fear and deprecate his wrath, and will

a Matt. xxviii. 1
b Mark xvi. 1, 2
c John viii. 2, 3
d John viii. 2, 3
e Matt. xxviii. 55
f Mark xv. 40

NOW ^a upon the first *day* of the week, ^b very early in the morning, ^c they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them.

2 And ^e they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

3 And ^d they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, ^e two men stood by them in shining garments.

5 And as ^f they were afraid, and bowed down *their faces* to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye ^g the living among the dead?

6 He is not here, but is risen: ^h remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

7 Saying, The Son of man must be

delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

8 And ⁱ they remembered his words, ^j And ^k returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

10 It was ^l Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary *the mother* of James, and other *women that were* with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

11 And their words seemed to them as ^m idle tales, and they believed them not.

12 Then ⁿ arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and, stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

a Matt. xxviii. 60
b Mark xvi. 47
c John xxi. 2
d Gen. xxi. 2
e Matt. xxviii. 2
f Mark xvi. 11
g John xv. 1
h Acts 10
i 12, 13, 14
j Dan. vii. 15
k 7-12, 16-19
l Mat. xxviii. 2-9
m Mark xvi. 5
n Acts 2
o Or, him that liveth
p Rev. i. 10, 11
q 14, 15, 18, 22
r John xxi. 34
s Matt. xxi. 40
t John xxi. 34
u Mark xvi. 11
v John xxi. 34
w Mark xvi. 11
x John xxi. 34
y Mark xvi. 11
z John xxi. 34

h John ii. 18-22
i 19-24
j Matt. xxviii. 7, 8
k Mark xvi. 7, 8

l Mark xvi. 2, 3
m John xxi. 11-13

125, Gen. xii. 14
2 Kings vii. 2
John ix. 16
Acts xxi. 15
John xxi. 3-10

attain to honourable thoughts of Christ and his salvation; they will confess him before men, even before those who despise and revile him; they will humbly rely on him, for deliverance "from the wrath to come," and for the blessings of his kingdom; and they will recommend, honour, and obey him, as far as they have opportunity. And Jesus will certainly take them under his protection, and make them partakers of his salvation; he will support them in the agonies of death, and immediately receive them to his glory: and should their passage thither be effected by a torturing and ignominious execution for crimes previously committed; even that circumstance shall not prevent the comfort of their dying moments, or impede their joyful "entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and 'Saviour Jesus Christ.'" God forbid that we should attempt to darken the lustre of such displays of the Redeemer's sovereign grace, out of fear lest men should abuse them, and be emboldened to continue in sin. Instances, in some respects similar, occur in every age; but such *evident* changes are very rare. The most of those who live strangers to serious religion die, at *best*, very ambiguously, and give but feeble hopes to discerning ministers and Christians; whilst some, like the hardened thief, depart, either despising the Saviour, or despairing of mercy: and the awful instances of this kind, which we sometimes hear of, would effectually prevent the delusion of sinning on in hopes of a death-bed repentance, did not the god of this world blind and infatuate the minds of unbelievers.

V. 44-56.

Let us come to Jesus without delay, and "give diligence to make our calling and election sure;" approaching the throne of grace, through the rented veil, through his atoning blood and prevailing intercession; that when we die, we may confidently commend our departing soul into our Father's hand, and by his light pass through that scene, which to unbelievers is encompassed with inexpressible darkness and horror. Let us not content ourselves with superficially viewing the transactions before us; with

acknowledging Jesus to have been a *righteous man*, or with some outward expressions of sorrow and remorse; but let us seek to glorify God by our repentance and conversion, by protesting against the counsel and deed of those who crucified the Saviour; by a sober, righteous, and godly life; and by filling up our stations in the community, and employing all our talents in his service, who died for us and rose again. Finally, in whatever business we engage, or however our hearts may be affected, let us never omit to prepare for, and keep holy, the day of sacred rest, according to the commandment of our God and Saviour.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV. V. 1-3. (*Notes, Matt. xxviii. 1-8. Mark xvi. 1-8. John xx. 1-18.*) *Two*, &c. (4.) Mary Magdalene and the other Mary saw only one angel in white, sitting on the stone which he had rolled from the door of the sepulchre; but the women here mentioned saw no angel till they had entered the sepulchre, when two appeared to them in garments, shining as lightning; (for so the word signifies.) Probably two distinct events are intended. (*Notes, John xx. 18.*) *Bowed*. (5.) As afraid of looking on the angels, or dazzled with the glory of their appearance. *Living*. Or, "Him that liveth." (*Marg.*) The sepulchre was a place for the dead, though none had before been buried there. *How he spake*. (6.) The familiar manner, in which the angel speaks of what passed between Jesus and them in Galilee, seems to intimate, that he had been present, though invisible, and heard what Jesus said." (*Doddridge.*)

V. 9-12. St. Luke gives no intimation that these women saw Jesus himself, in the way to the city; as the women mentioned by St. Matthew did. (*Marg. Ref.*) This confirms the supposition, that the women did not go to the sepulchre all in one company; that they returned at several times, and by different ways; and that some of them were at the sepulchre more than once. The apostles, however, disregarded in a great measure their report, and deemed it to be the effect of terror, or a warm imagination, and not reality; for they had no expectation of such an

abundantly proved that he was great in the sight of God, as well as in the judgment of all the people. Yet at length the chief-priests and rulers had apprehended him, and delivered him to the Roman governor to be condemned to death, and had actually crucified him. But as for them, they had confidently believed him to be the promised Messiah, who had so long been predicted, and was then expected to redeem Israel from bondage, and to rule over them in great prosperity: and therefore these events, so contrary to their expectations, had exceedingly distressed and perplexed them; seeing they could not understand how his crucifixion could consist with his *redeeming* his people. He had indeed spoken some things about rising on the third day, which day was arrived: and some women of their company had exceedingly surprised them; for having gone early to visit the sepulchre, they could not find his body, and they had also declared that they had seen a vision of angels, who assured them that he was alive: and some men of their company had also gone to the sepulchre, and found that the body was gone, but they had not seen him risen from the dead. This account seems to imply, that these disciples came away before the women *who had seen Jesus* returned to the apostles: though some think that the contrary is intimated in the expression, "Him they saw "not;" which may signify that the women reported that they had seen him; but that the disciples thought, *at most*, that it was only the appearance of an angel in his form. (*Acts* xii. 15.) 'But why should not Christ be as yet known by them? That they might more unreservedly express their sentiments; and that they might not rest on the bare authority of a Teacher; but on the arguments 'he was about to produce.' (*Beza.*)

all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

28 And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went: ^r and he made as though he would have gone further.

29 But they ^s constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, ^a he took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave to them.

31 And ⁱ their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he ^{*} vanished out of their sight.

32 And they said one to another, ⁱ Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?

33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, ^m and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

34 Saying, the Lord is risen indeed, and ⁿ hath appeared to Simon.

35 And ^{*} they told what things were ^o done in the way, and how he was known ^p of them in breaking of bread.

36 ¶ And as they thus spake, ^p Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, ^q Peace be unto you.

37 But they were ^r terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? ^r and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

39 Behold ^t my hands and my feet, it is I myself. Handle me, and see: ^u for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them ^v his hands and his feet.

41 And while they yet ^x believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, ^y Have ye here any meat?

42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey-comb.

43 And he took it, ^z and did eat before them.

1 Cor. xiv. 2
Mark vi. 14

xiv. 21 Gen.
xiii. 3, 2 Rom.
ix. 5 Acts xvi.
15.

a. 35 16 13 xvii.
19. Matt. xvi.
12. xv. 26 xxvi.
26. Mark vi. 11.
xvii. 6. xiv. 27.
John vi. 11 24.
Acts xxvii. 33.
16. John xxi. 13
-16.

• Or, *constrained*
to be seen of them.
19. 30. John xxi.
34.

k Ps. cix. 34.
Prov. xxix. 9.
17 18 1. 4 Job.
xv. 16. xx. 9.
John xi. 63.
Heb. xii. 12.

l. 16. Acts xvii. 2.
3 xxviii. 24.
m John xxi. 19-
29.

n xxvi. 15-62.
Mark xvi. 7.
1 Cor. xv. 5.

q x. 5. 14. lvi. 19.
19 Matt. x. 18
John xxi. 19-23.
John xxi. 27.

xxvi. 32. xxviii.
2 Thes. iii. 16
Rev. i. 4

xxviii. 13. Job
iv. 14-16 Matt.
xiv. 26, 27 Mark
vi. 49. 50 Acts
xii. 15

• Jer. iv. 14. Dem.
iv. 5. 19. Matt.
xv. 8. Heb. iv.
13

t John xxi. 20 25.
26 Acts i. 3.
1 John i. 1.

u xxii. 46 Num.
xvi. 22 Eccl. vi.
7. 17 Ps. v. 29.
Heb. xii. 3.

x Gen. xli. 26-
28 Job ix. 16.
Ps. cxxvi. 1, 2.

John xxi. 22.
y John xxi. 5 10
-13.

z Acts x. 41.

V. 25—31. When the two disciples had stated their difficulties to the supposed stranger, he addressed them as one filled with astonishment at their ignorance and dulness. They appeared perfectly devoid of understanding, and incapable of forming a proper judgment in this great concern; which arose from their unwillingness to believe all those things, that the ancient prophets had spoken concerning the Messiah. For was it not plain, from their writings, that the promised Redeemer *must needs pass* through those very sufferings which Jesus had endured, before he entered into his glory? The purposes of God, the predictions of his word, the honour of his name, and the nature of his salvation, concurred in rendering this incumbent. To satisfy them of this, and to show them that there was nothing in those events, which ought either to perplex or disconcert them, he began with the types and prophecies in the books of Moses, and so proceeded regularly through the several parts of the Old Testament, adducing and expounding those prophecies which related to himself. (*Marg. Ref.*) As they thus discoursed they arrived at Emmaus; and he offered to go further, in order to excite their more earnest invitations: accordingly they *constrained*, or *importunately pressed him*, to spend the night with them, as the evening now approached, that they might have further conversation with him on those interesting subjects; to which he consented. But when they sat down to meat, he, though a supposed stranger, acted as head of the family; so that he took bread, and blessed, and breaking, gave it to them, as his custom had been at their ordinary meals; and, the supernatural restraint being at the same time taken from their eyes, they immediately perceived who their instructive Companion was: as soon as they were fully satisfied in this matter, he was pleased to render himself invisible.

and to withdraw from them; but in what manner, it does not become us to inquire. *Ought not*, &c. (26.) 'Is it not by those prophets foretold to be decreed by God, that the Messias should be despised by men, and slaughtered by them, before he should enter on his kingdom?' (*Hammond.*) *Beginning*, &c. (27.) 'We may hence learn that the Mosaic sacrifices, and especially the solemn anniversary expiation, typified the sufferings of Christ; as also did the oblation of Isaac, and the lifting up of the brazen serpent.' (*Whitby.*) (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 32—35. When the two disciples had considered the circumstances of this most extraordinary event, they peculiarly recollected the effects which the conversation of their Lord had produced on them: for their affections had been so enlivened, that their hearts seemed to burn with hope, joy, love, gratitude, and admiration, whilst he opened to them the Scriptures, and showed the accomplishment of them, in his sufferings, death, and resurrection. Being therefore earnestly desirous of communicating the glad tidings to their brethren, they set off immediately, and returned to Jerusalem, where they found the apostles assembled together with other disciples; many of whom, in a mixture of astonishment and exultation, assured them, that *indeed* their beloved Lord was risen from the dead, and had appeared to Simon Peter, to assure him that he had forgiven his late denial of him: and then the two disciples related how he had appeared to them in their journey, and discovered himself to them whilst he was breaking bread. Yet after all this we find that some of the company did not fully believe them, so backward were they to credit this unexpected event. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 36—43. (*Notes, John xxi. 10—23.*) Whilst the disciples were discoursing on these subjects, Jesus himself,

44 And he said unto them, ^a These are the words which I spake unto you, ^b while I was yet with you, ^c that all things must be fulfilled which were written ^d in the law of Moses, ^e and in the prophets, ^f and in the psalms, concerning me.

45 Then ^g opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

46 And said unto them, ^h Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

47 And ⁱ that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name ^j among

all nations, ^k beginning at Jerusalem. ^l And ^m ye are witnesses of these things.

48 And he led them out ⁿ as far as to Bethany; and ^o he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. ^p

51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, ^q he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

52 And ^r they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem ^s with great joy;

53 And were continually ^t in the temple, praising and blessing God. ^u Amen.

in a miraculous manner, entered the room, and appeared in the midst of them; assuring them, by his salutation of peace, of his entire reconciliation to them, though they had so lately forsaken him; and promising them spiritual peace and every blessing. Yet after all the preparations which had been made, they were greatly alarmed at his presence, as if they had seen a spirit, or an apparition resembling him. He therefore expostulated with them on their unreasonable incredulity; inquiring why they thus troubled themselves, and indulged so many perplexing thoughts, seeing every circumstance so exactly accorded to his former declarations, and was so well suited to inspire them with joy and confidence. To remove all their doubts, he showed them the wounds in his hands and feet; and allowed them to touch him, that they might be sure that it was not an apparition, but his body really risen from the dead. (*Marg. Ref.*) Yet they had been sunk so low in despondency by his crucifixion, that the fact, however evident, seemed to be too wonderful and joyful to be true; and they still feared lest it should prove an illusion. To obviate this still more, Jesus was pleased also to eat before them, "a piece of a broiled fish, and an honey comb;" (which some think was a kind of cake, or bread, in use among them;) for eating might consist with, though it were not needful to, that kind of life to which he was risen. It is evident, from the appeal of our Lord to the senses of the apostles, that no greater certainty can here be had of any thing, than the testimony of our eyes, ears, and other senses; and that it is unreasonable, in the highest degree imaginable, to require men to believe, in direct opposition to them.

V. 44—49. Having thus at length satisfied their minds, our Lord proceeded to show the consistency of these events with his former discourses, as well as with the predictions of the Messiah contained in the several parts of the Scripture: and as their remaining prejudices alone caused their difficulties, and closed their minds to such evident truths, he powerfully removed the obstruction, and "opened their understanding," as well as explained the Scriptures to them. "It is one thing to open the Scriptures

all nations, ¹ beginning at Jerusalem.

48 And ² ye are witnesses of these things.

49 And, behold, ³ I send the promise of my Father upon you: ⁴ but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

50 ¶ And he led them out ⁵ as far as to Bethany; and ⁶ he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, ⁷ he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

52 And ⁸ they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem ⁹ with great joy;

53 And were continually ¹⁰ in the temple, praising and blessing God. ¹¹ Amen.

10. Heb. i. 3.—¹¹ Matt. xxviii. 9, 12. John xx. 20.—¹² Ps. xxviii. 27. 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—¹³ 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—¹⁴ 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—¹⁵ 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—¹⁶ 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—¹⁷ 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—¹⁸ 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—¹⁹ 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—²⁰ 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—²¹ 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—²² 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—²³ 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—²⁴ 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—²⁵ 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—²⁶ 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—²⁷ 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—²⁸ 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—²⁹ 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—³⁰ 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—³¹ 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—³² 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—³³ 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—³⁴ 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 15. 14.—³⁵ 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 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forty days after our Lord's resurrection, (during which space he had in different places appeared to his disciples, and given them copious instructions for their work;) he at length met them at Jerusalem, and went before them to the confines of Bethany; and whilst with uplifted hands he pronounced blessings upon them, he was marvellously parted from them, and ascended visibly, till a cloud intercepted their sight of him. Thus he was carried up into heaven, "leading captivity captive," and ascending his glorious throne, that from thence he might bestow all blessings most freely and liberally on his chosen people. (*Marg. Ref.*) When the apostles and disciples had witnessed this august and surprising scene, they prostrated themselves to worship him as their Lord and their God: and then they returned to Jerusalem, not mourning for their loss, but rejoicing in the exaltation of their beloved Lord, and in glad expectation of the performance of his promises. And whilst they abode together at Jerusalem, waiting and praying with one accord for the Spirit of power, truth, and holiness, they continually resorted to the temple at the proper times, to join in the worship there performed; and especially in those psalms of praise and thanksgiving, which were sung under the direction of the priests and Levites. (*Notes. 1 Chron. xxv.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1--12.

The Lord "loveth those who love him, and they who seek him early shall find him." They who seek him humbly, though they are at present in error and perplexity, yet shall at length be directed into a saving acquaintance with his truth. All our mistakes in religion spring from ignorance or forgetfulness of the word of God: and our judgments will be rectified, when we call to remembrance, and are enabled to understand what he has revealed and promised. This forms one great use of faithful preaching, for by it men are continually reminded of the words of Christ; and especially they are led to consider those things which relate to his sufferings, his death, and resurrection. Many errors in religion are like "seeking the living among the dead;" yet *they*, who seek happiness from worldly vanities, or in sinful pleasures, or who seek salvation from human inventions and superstitions, are most fatally thus employed. Even where a measure of faith and grace is found, how unbelieving are men on some occasions! not only in those things which are contrary to their prejudices, but in those also that are above their experience or expectation: these, however attested, seem to be idle tales, and they believe them not! Yet a diligent spirit of inquiry will gradually lead to a more clear perception of spiritual things.

V. 13--35.

When Christians travel, or are any ways employed in company together, they should be careful to commune of those things which relate to their gracious Lord, and to open their difficulties to each other for mutual edification. When thus engaged, they may expect that Jesus himself will be invisibly present: nay, he will sometimes speak by those with whom they are not acquainted, or from whom they have no expectations. When we have carefully investigated the yokes of our sorrow and dejections, we shall perhaps find that those events, which seemed to blast all our hopes, were indeed as necessary to their accomplishment, as the crucifixion of Christ was to

the redemption of his people; and that our fears and troubles arose from unbelief alone, and not from want of evidence, security, or information. Our gracious Lord will reprove his disciples for their folly and ignorance, and their slowness of heart to believe the Scriptures: for the more diligently we study, and the more fully we understand, them, the more evidently will it appear, that the Saviour of sinners "ought to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory." We should also keep in mind continually, that every part of Scripture testifies to us of Christ, in some way or other, if we spiritually understand it. When we earnestly desire and entreat his presence with us, he will come and abide with us: and this will render our conversation, our worship, and even our meals, blessed. But our more rejoicing seasons of communion with him and his saints are commonly of short duration: yet it may afterwards be exhilarating to remember, how our hearts glowed with heavenly affections whilst he opened to us the Scriptures, as we were reading, hearing, or meditating on them; and how he made himself and his glorious salvation known to us, as we were breaking bread in his name. We should hasten to communicate to our sorrowing brethren these discoveries and communications, which have gladdened our hearts; that we may thus mutually strengthen each other's faith and hope, and the assurance "that the Lord is risen indeed," as our experience of his power, truth, and love, hath abundantly proved.

V. 36--53.

When we meet together in the name of the gracious Saviour, he will again and again "manifest himself unto us, as he doth not unto the world;" he will speak pardon and peace to our souls, and dispel our errors and troubles; he will assure us of his love, and "open our understanding to understand the Scriptures." Then we shall see, with increasing clearness, that thus it was written, that redemption is completed, and that repentance and remission of sins by faith in his name should freely be preached to all nations. Blessed be God, that ever they were preached in this nation! may we be made partakers of them, and endeavour to diffuse the blessed tidings further and further! As they who crucified the Lord of glory had the first offers made them of salvation through his blood, what sinners need now despair of mercy? And as thousands of the inhabitants of Jerusalem were in a few weeks converted to him, whose death they had clamorously demanded, why should the ministers of the Gospel be discouraged, or cease to labour, pray, and hope for success, when a short time may cause them to witness so happy a change? Pardoned rebels, where "sin hath abounded," but grace hath much more abounded," are unexceptionable witnesses to the love and power of our risen Redeemer: yet without the promise of the Father, even the blessed gift of his sanctifying Spirit, we can neither preach nor hear the word of God to good effect. And though we do not expect miraculous powers, we are yet encouraged to wait and pray for his more ordinary, but not less valuable, influences, through our risen and ascended Advocate. Let us then plead his promise, worship his name, rejoice in his glory, and wait for his salvation; and let us continually attend on his ordinances, praise and bless him for his mercies, set our affections on things above, and expect the Redeemer's return to complete our felicity. Amen, "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

THE GOSPEL

ACCORDING TO

ST. JOHN.

The several particulars, which the Scripture records, concerning the inspired writer of this Gospel, may be seen and compared by consulting the annexed references. (xiii. 23—26. xix. 27—29. 36. xx. 2—10. xxi. 2. 7. 20—25. Matt. iv. 21, 22. x. 2. xx. 20—23. Mark i. 19, 20. v. 37. ix. 2. 38—40. xiv. 33. Luke ix. 49—56. xxi. 8. Acts iii. 1—11. iv. 13—20. viii. 14. Gal. ii. 9. Rev. i. 1. 9. x. 11.) He was in many things distinguished among the apostles, and was honoured as the bosom-friend of the divine Saviour. To this information, subsequent histories have added but little; and that little is not always entitled to our implicit credit. Some particulars, however, will be mentioned in the prefaces to the other books ascribed to him. It is probable, that this apostle continued in the neighbourhood of Judea, till the time approached for the predicted destruction of Jerusalem. It is recorded, that he then went into Asia; resided some years at Ephesus; was banished to the island of Patmos, by the emperor Domitian; but returned to Asia after the death of that emperor: that he lived to be nearly a hundred years of age, and then died a natural death, being the only apostle who escaped martyrdom. On some of these points there are different opinions: but they cannot be discussed in this place.

The general current of ancient writers declare that the apostle wrote this Gospel, at an advanced time of life; and yet, strange to say, many learned moderns are of a different opinion. The question is perhaps of more difficulty than importance: yet, it appears to me, that several passages become more interesting, by supposing that it was written long after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the martyrdom of the other apostles. (Note, v. 2—4.) Only this evangelist mentions Peter, as the apostle who smote the high priest's servant, and Malchus, as the name of that servant. Now it is obvious to conclude, that he disclosed that which the others had concealed; because Peter was, at the time when he wrote, out of the reach of all his enemies. He alone records the resurrection of Lazarus; a miracle so stupendous and notorious, that one can hardly conceive how the other evangelists could pass it over in silence. But the Jews had consulted to put Lazarus also to death. While Lazarus lived, the memory of the miracle could not be lost in Judea; in other countries, it might be published by word of mouth; but the public recording of it by the evangelists, while the Jewish priests and rulers had authority, might needlessly have exasperated them, and exposed Lazarus to imminent danger. Profound silence, in the public writings of the Christians, seems therefore to have been observed, till Jerusalem was destroyed, and Lazarus deceased; and then the whole was circumstantially related. The other evangelists record our Lord's predictions concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and the dispersion of the Jews; but this writer is entirely silent on the subject. Now, can a more satisfactory account of this be given, than by supposing, that many of the predicted events had at that time received their accomplishment? And this, with the consideration, that St. John was appointed to be the prophet of the New Testament, in respect of the Church, and the nations as far as connected with it, even to the end of the world, may also account for the circumstance, that we find no express and particular prophecies in this Gospel, as in the others. None of the other evangelists, (except by genealogies concerning our Lord's descent from Abraham and David,) go further back, than the miraculous conception of John Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus: but this apostle begins his Gospel by at once declaring, who the Saviour was, antecedently to his incarnation. This is supposed to have been done, in opposition to certain Heretics of those early days, some of whom denied our Lord's real Deity, and others his real humanity. The testimonies of John Baptist also, as here record-

ed, are far more numerous, and explicit, both in respect of the Deity, atonement, and salvation of Christ: as "the Word made Flesh;" as "full of grace and truth, from whose fulness all receive;" as "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world;" the Son of God, the Bridegroom of the Church, &c. ; than we have hitherto met with. The beginning of our Lord's miracles and ministry from a short time after his baptism, till John Baptist was imprisoned, (a space of about two years,) is here alone recorded. And one miracle, our Lord's discourse with the scribes, priests, and rulers, and the great council of the nation concerning it, in the earlier part of his ministry, is here alone transmitted to us. Indeed scarcely any of the miracles or incidents of our Saviour's life, which the other evangelists record, are here repeated; and in the exceptions, it is evident that the subsequent discourses, as more fully and explicitly declaring the great doctrines of Christianity, (some of which had by the others, been rather noted obscurely than fully stated;) required the repetition of the narrative. In short, while this Gospel, published long after, by the only surviving apostle, was suited to establish the authority of those which preceded; it is almost entirely an original work, and for more than an appendix to them, as some have called it. From about the twenty-sixth verse of the sixth chapter, to the end of the eleventh, the whole is new: and even the events, which preceded and made way for our Lord's crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, though for substance the same; are enriched with such a variety of new and interesting information, as is exceedingly suited to fix the attention and impress the mind of the reader; especially that most affectionate, and pathetic discourse of our Lord with his disciples, just before his crucifixion, which occupies the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters; and his prayer for them and for his Church to the end of time, which closes the whole in the seventeenth chapter. To this I affix no epithet; as every epithet, and every exposition, must fall below such a subject. Our Lord's repeatedly meeting his assembled disciples, on the first day of the week; with the affecting and instructive account of Thomas's absence the first time; his obstinate incredulity; our Saviour's condescension to him; and Thomas's conviction, and confession of him as his Lord and his God, are not recorded elsewhere. The beautiful account also of Jesus's meeting the disciples, at the lake of Tiberias; his threefold rebuke of Peter, (who had thrice denied him,) by thrice questioning his love to him, and thrice requiring him to show his love, by feeding his sheep and his lambs; with the prediction of the manner in which this apostle should at length glorify God; the tacit readiness of John to follow in the same path; and the obscure intimation, that perhaps this might not be the case, is added by this evangelist, in the most simple and affecting manner imaginable. St. John's style is always plain, simple, and unaffected; and generally perspicuous: and when it appears not so, this will commonly be found to arise from the sublimity of his subject, to which no human language is adequate, rather than to any want of exactness in selecting and arranging his words and expressions. Upon the whole, the reader may enter on the perusal of this book, under the full assurance, that it is inexpressibly rich in most important instructions; and if the commentator do not set its riches before him, the fault is wholly his. But let it be here observed, that in this Gospel peculiarly, the teaching of the Holy Spirit, who "glorifies Christ, and receives of the things of Christ, to show unto us," is indispensably needful, and must be sought by daily, fervent, and humble prayer.

CHAP. I.

The Word with God from the beginning, is the Creator of all things, has life in himself and is the Light of men, 1—5. John a witness to that true and only Light, which was unknown to the world that he made, and not received by his own, except by such as were born of God, and made his children, 6—13. The Word became flesh, and displayed his glory, as the only begotten of the Father, 14. John testifies to his superior dignity and fulness whence all receive; for grace and truth came by him, 15—17. He declares the invisible God to men, 18. Various testimonies of John to the Pharisees, concerning himself and Jesus, 19—23. John points him out as the Lamb of God, and the Son of God,

NOTES.

CHAP. I. V. 1—3. The other Evangelists leave us to collect the divine dignity of Christ from his miracles and doctrine, and from the various declarations and displays of his glory and perfections which they record; but John opens his Gospel with an express avowal and statement of this fundamental truth. He declares, that, "In the beginning was the Word." (*Marg. Ref.*) Before the world had a beginning the Word existed: nothing could precede time, but an immeasurable incomprehensible eternity. Time began, when the creation was called forth into existence by the Word himself: and in this "beginning, the Word was," that is, from all eternity. Critics have shown, that there is an important difference "between in the beginning," and "from the beginning:" yet the context more generally fixes the meaning. "The devil was a murderer," or manslayer, from the beginning; but this he could not be ere man existed. (viii. 44.) Some imagine that the evangelist referred to the speculations of Plato and his disciples, in the term, the WORD, or the LOGOS, which that philosopher used: but it is not likely that he would at all countenance such reveries, which seem originally to have been borrowed from Revelation, though they were at length so distorted and darkened, as to be little better than atheism. — "The Jews were constantly taught in their synagogues, that "the Word of God" was the same as God; and that "by the Word all things were made;" which undoubtedly was the cause why St. John delivered so great a mystery in so few words, as speaking unto them, who at the first apprehension understood him. Only that which they knew not was, that this Word was made flesh, and that this Word made flesh was Jesus Christ." (*Bp. Pearson.*) The same learned divine shows, that this way of speaking was in use before Platonism was at all introduced among the Jews; and Jerome, in his note on *Ez. i. 24*, says, that the Septuagint translate the words, rendered in our version "the voice of the Almighty," the voice of the Logos, or second person in

who baptizeth with the Holy Ghost, 29—34. Two of his disciples follow Jesus, 35—39. Andrew, one of them, brings Peter to him, whom he surnames Cephas. 40—42. Philip is called, who brings Nathanael, 43—45. Jesus declares him to be an Israelite indeed; and he confesses Jesus as the Son of God and the king of Israel, 46—49. Jesus promises that he shall see still greater things, 50, 51.

IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

the sacred Trinity. The clause, however, is at present wanting in some copies of the Septuagint; and in others, the words *τε λογου*, do not appear to be a translation of the original word *Shaddāi*, but of that rendered *speech*.—"As the voice of a mighty one; when they went, there was the voice of speech, like the voice of an host."—The word may probably be taken in its ordinary signification: though we may certainly conclude, that this was the appearance of the second person in the sacred Trinity; both because he appears under the resemblance of a man, (26,) and from what hath been said on this subject, upon *Is. vi. 1.* (*Lonth.*) (*Notes, Is. vi. 1—4. Ez. i. 15—28.*) It is indeed probable that the apostle referred to expressions often made use of by the ancient Jewish writers, who spoke of "the Word," in language not very dissimilar from that of the ancient fathers of the Church and other Christian divines, who, endeavouring to explain a mysterious subject, and to add further information to that which the Scripture hath afforded us, have only darkened it, and laid it open to the objections of Infidels. I apprehend, however, that John especially regarded the doctrine of the Old Testament in what he declared. We have in many places observed the clearest intimations of distinct persons called *JEHOVAH*, in the writings of the ancient prophets; and Solomon especially speaks of *Wisdom*, in language very similar to that which John here uses concerning the Word. (*Marg. Ref.*) But the apostle spake as he was moved by the Holy Spirit, and could refer to no higher authority than his own: he expressly states the doctrine, *in the way of a divine testimony*; and we should endeavour to ascertain his meaning, according to the most simple and obvious interpretation of his words; and explain occasional intimations on the same mysterious subject by them and not them by others. The title of "the Word" is peculiar to this Evangelist, at least with but few exceptions; it may signify *Reason*, and is nearly equivalent to *Wisdom*, as speaking by Solomon. Probably the title is given to Christ, because by him the perfections,

a Gen. i. 1. Prov. viii. 22. 23. Eph. iii. 9. Col. i. 17. Heb. i. 10. vii. 3. xlvii. p. Rev. i. 8. i. 2. 3. 12. 13. 14. 1 John i. 1. i. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945. 946. 947. 948. 949. 950. 951. 952. 953. 954. 955. 956. 957. 958. 959. 960. 961. 962. 963. 964. 965. 966. 967. 968. 969. 970. 971. 972. 973. 974. 975. 976. 977. 978. 979. 980. 981. 982. 983. 984. 985. 986. 987. 988. 989. 990. 991. 992. 993. 994. 995. 996. 997. 998. 999. 1000.

f. v. 21. 28. xi. 25.
 xlv. 6. 1 Cor.
 xv. 39. Col. iii.
 4. 1 John i. 2
 w. 11. Rev. xxi.
 xlv. 5, 6. 16 xlv. 6. ix. 1-3. Mal. iv. 2. Matt. iv. 16. Luke i. 78, 79. h. 32. Acts
 xxvi. 23. Eph. v. 13. 1 John i. 7. Rev. xxi. 16.

4 In ^t him was life; and ^e the Life was
the Light of men.

will, and secret counsels of God, are made known to man; especially his hidden and deep thoughts of wisdom and love in our redemption; even as a man communicates his secret purposes and counsels to others by his *word*: and by him exclusively; for all prophets shine by his light, and report his testimony. It follows, "The WORD was with 'God,'" as the apostle had not mentioned Christ as the Son of God, so he did not say the Father, but God. The Word existed, and was with God, when no creature was produced, (Notes, 1 John i. 1-3.) "And the 'WORD WAS GOD.'" Christianity was doubtless intended to deliver the world from idolatry, that principal work of the devil: it would therefore have been the most palpable absurdity, to suppose that one of its divinely inspired teachers should use such expressions, at the opening of his Gospel, as were exactly suited to draw the whole Christian Church into a new species of idolatry, and which could scarcely fail to have that effect. Yet this must be the consequence of supposing the person, of whom he here spake, to have been a mere creature, however highly exalted. For though the article is not prefixed to the original word, translated God; yet that term is so frequently used, and even by this Evangelist, without the article, for God the Father, that scarcely the shadow of an objection can be drawn from that circumstance. And what can we understand by this testimony, "The Word was God," but that he was possessed of the same divine nature and perfections with the Father; participated the same glory and felicity; and was in every respect equally entitled to the adoration of all rational creatures that should ever exist, as that God with whom he was? The only objection to this inference seems to be, that it is incomprehensible: but it should carefully be noted, that they, who will not admit of it *on this account, and for other reasons*, are driven into hypotheses, the absurdity of which at least is perfectly comprehensible. Every succeeding generation of opponents hitherto have been induced to give up the system of their predecessors as indefensible, or at least as less specious than more modern discoveries or refinements; and many from age to age contend each for his own scheme of getting over the difficulties here thrown in the way; yet their utmost improvements on the subject scarcely need any other answer, than to compare them with this divine testimony, to which they must be in everlasting opposition. The inspired writer, however, was equally careful to establish the *personal distinction*, as the eternal Godhead, of the Word; and therefore he adds again, "The same 'was in the beginning with God.'" Having thus stated the deity and distinct personality of "the Word," he proceeds to ascribe all the work of creation to him, as working in perfect union of will and purpose with the Father and the Holy Spirit, (Notes, &c. Gen. i. 2. 26. Col. i. 15-18 Heb. i. 1-3.) In this he is so explicit, as to use a repetition, which at first sight may appear needless; "All things were made by him;" but the word *all* is sometimes used when absolute universality is not meant; therefore he adds, that "without him was not any thing

5 And ^h the Light shineth in darkness,
and the darkness comprehended it
not.

"made that was made;" or *not so much as one single being*, for so the original words imply. In what language can the divine power and operation of the great Creator be more emphatically described? Or what could have been said, better suited to lead every one to look up to and adore "the Word," as his omnipotent Maker and Sovereign Lord? To suppose him to be a mere creature, is to suppose infinite power and perfection communicable to a creature; and the whole universe standing in the same relation to a creature, as they do to the infinite and eternal God: and to assert that "the Word" was only an instrument, or subordinate agent in creation, besides the absurdity of it expressly contradicts the Scripture, which says, that "JEHOVAH stretcheth forth the heavens alone, and 'spreadeth abroad the earth by himself.'" (Is. xlv. 24:) and that "he will not give his glory to another." Indeed it is self-evident, that "he who built all things is God," in the strictest and fullest meaning of the word: yet this doctrine is not grounded on any single expression, but on a combination of very many; and it will therefore appear more incontrovertible as we proceed.

V. 4, 5. The evangelist here further testifies, that "in the Word was *life*;" (even as water is in a fountain, or spring, or as light is in the sun,) whence it issued forth to animate all orders of living creatures, from the most minute to the most exalted. "And the Life was the 'Light of men;'" all the powers of man's understanding, and all the information communicated to him from every quarter and by every avenue, all that can be called *light*, natural, intellectual, moral, or spiritual, is from "the 'Word,'" and that Fountain of Life that is in him: especially he, who is the *Life* of the universe, is become the *Light* of fallen men, to show them the way to everlasting life and felicity. But this light shineth in darkness;" men hold the truth in unrighteousness: the discoveries made of the Creator by the works of creation, as addressed to the natural reason and conscience of men, fail of producing a profitable knowledge of God, because of the depravity of the human heart; and notwithstanding this light, the world continues enveloped in darkness and wickedness. The light of Revelation, in the former ages of the world, had shone amidst the darkness which it had not dispelled: the Gentiles still continue in almost total darkness; and the Jews misunderstood, perverted, or neglected the light. Even the Christian Revelation, though more complete, still shineth as a light in the midst of a dark world, which generally lieth in error, ignorance, and wickedness. For "the darkness comprehended it not," or "did not apprehend it." Fully to *comprehend* the light which God affords us, concerning himself, his truth, and will, may be impossible to a finite creature; but the perverseness to which sin and Satan have reduced men causes them to despise, hate, and reject the light: "they like not to 'retain God in their knowledge;'" they will not take hold of, or retain, instruction; they do not avail themselves of the light, but close their eyes to it; so that as to numbers it shines in vain. (Marg. Ref.) This is the real,

h. 10. 11. 9. 20.
 x. 1. 6. 40. 100
 xlv. 13. 17
 Psal. i. 22. 29.
 2 Cor. ii. 15
 2 Cor. ii. 14

133. iii. 28. In
xl. 3-6. Mal
iii. i. iv. 5. 6.
Matt. iii. i. 30.
xi. 10. xxi. 25
Mark. i. 1-8
Luke. i. 15-17
76. iii. 2. 46.
Act. xiii. 24, 25
63. Luke. i. 13. 61-
62.
1. 19. 26, 27. 29.
32-34. 36. iii.
26-36. v. 33-
25. Acts. xix. 4.
m. 9. ii. 26. Eph.
iii. 9. i. Tim. ii.
4. Tit. ii. 11.
2. Pet. iii. 9.
2. 20. iii. 28.
4. v. 32. xlv. 6.
xvi. 1. Matt. vi.
23. i. John. i. 6.
v. 20.
p. 7. 12. xii. 46. Is. viii. 20. i. Thes. v. 4-7. — q. 18. v. 17. Gen. iv. 6-9. x. i.
13. xxi. i. xviii. 33. Ex. iii. 4-6. Acts. xiv. 17. xlii. 24-27. Heb. i. 3. — r. 3. Jer.
x. 11. 12. Heb. i. 2. xi. 3.

6 ¶ There was ^a a man sent from God,
whose name was ^k John.

7 The same came for ^a a witness, to
bear witness of the light, ^m that all men
through him might believe.

8 He was not ⁿ that Light, but
was sent to bear witness of that
Light.

9 That was ^o the true Light, which
lighteth ^p every man that cometh into the
world.

10 He ^q was in the world, ^r and the

world was made by him, and the world
^s knew him not.

11 He ^t came unto his own, ^u and his
own received him not.

12 But as many as ^v received him, ^w to
them gave he ^x power to become the sons
of God, ^y even to them that believe on his
name :

13 Which ^z were born, ^{aa} not of blood,
^{ab} nor of the will of the flesh, ^{ac} nor of the
will of man, but ^{ad} of God.

* Or, the right, or privilege. — z. ii. 23. iii. 18. xx. 31. Matt. xii. 21. Acts. iii. 16. John.
iii. 23. v. 12, 13. — aa. i. 3. 1 Pet. i. 3. 23. ii. 2. i. John. iii. 9. iv. 7. v. 1. 4. 18.
viii. 24. Matt. iii. 9. Rom. ix. 7-9. — ac. Gen. xxv. 23. 28. xxvii. 4-33. 40. ix.
10-12. — d. Ps. cx. 3. Rom. ix. 1-9. x. 1-3. 1 Cor. iii. 6. Phil. ii. 13. Jam. i. 15.
e. iii. 6-8. Tit. iii. 5. i. John. ii. 28, 29.

and in some sense the only reason, why Christ, the Light of the world, hath not by his Gospel enlightened all the nations of the earth. But no external revelation can effectually profit an apostate rebellious creature, except it be attended with an internal operation of the Holy Spirit, preparing the vitiated organ to receive the light; and as it seems to have been the design of infinite wisdom, in leaving the nations during so many ages without revelation, to prove, *by facts*, what a blind guide man's boasted reason is; so it appears also to be the purpose of God to show, in the same manner, that even Revelation alone will not profit fallen creatures, without the teaching of his Holy Spirit. When these two humiliating truths are undeniably proved, we have ground in Scripture to conclude, that God will render the light of revelation effectual, by his powerful teaching, to "fill the earth with the knowledge of his glory, even as the waters cover the sea." The passage under consideration may be applied to all these particulars; but the evangelist seems especially to have referred to that glimmering of divine light, which had shone among the Jews amidst the darkness of the Pagan nations.

V. 6—9. The coming of Christ was intended to make way for a more general diffusion of divine light among men; and this was introduced by the ministry of John Baptist. He was "a man sent from God," wise, holy, and useful; but the evangelist spake of him in a very different language from what he had used respecting "the Word," "that was with God, and was God, and made all things." John came on purpose "to bear witness of the Light;" to announce the coming of "the Light of the world;" to call men's attention to "the brightness of the rising of the sun of righteousness;" and to testify of Jesus, that he was to be "a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be for salvation unto the ends of the earth;" in order "that all men," (or men of all ranks, characters, and descriptions,) might by his testimony be brought to believe in Christ. Nothing can more fully prove the darkness which envelopes men's minds, than the consideration, that when the Light was manifested, it was needful that a witness should be sent from God, to call men's attention to it. Light is its own witness, and renders itself as well as other objects, conspicuous: but then this pre-supposes that men have eyes, that they are not blinded, nor wilfully closed, nor locked up in sleep; for in any of these cases,

"the light may shine in darkness, and the darkness comprehend it not;" and it is for similar reasons that it is necessary for us to cry out, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." John was indeed "a burning and a shining light;" but "he was not *that* Light," who came to illuminate a benighted world; having no light for himself, except from Christ, or for others, but by reflecting His light. He was merely a "witness to the Word," who was indeed, "that Light, which enlighteneth every man, that cometh into the world." That is, he is the source of all true light, by which any man in the world ever was, is, or shall be, enlightened; all that comes not from him is but darkness, at least it is not *profitable light in spiritual things*. We can no more infer from this expression, that Christ gives every individual a measure of spiritual light, than from one just before, (7.) that every man actually believeth in Christ through John's testimony; both inferences are alike contrary to Scripture and to facts. It may further be observed, that Jesus was the true Light, not only in opposition to the false and pretended light of philosophy, and the perverted light of the traditions of the elders, but also in distinction from the typical light of the Mosaic ceremonies, and the derived light of prophets and apostles. "With this light he enlighteneth every man, namely, who doth receive him." (12.) (Whitby.)

V. 10—13. Before Christ appeared as man on earth, "He was in the world;" both as he upheld and governed it by his providence, and as he enlightened some of its inhabitants by his word and Spirit. But though the world was made and sustained by him, yet men in general "knew him not," so as to worship, trust, and obey him. (Marg. Ref.) When he appeared in our nature, he came immediately to his own professed people, the Jews, whose Lord, King, and Redeemer, he had ever been; whom he had chosen, brought out of Egypt, settled in Canaan, separated and preserved distinct from other nations; and whom he had favoured with his word and ordinances; so that the whole of their constitution was his appointment for their good. Yet when he came, in the fulness of time, according to their ancient prophecies, they received him not; but thrust him from them with contempt and abhorrence, notwithstanding the displays which he made of his almighty power and divine perfection! But

14 And ^f the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and ^f we beheld his glory, the glory as of ^h the only begotten of the Father,) ⁱ full of grace and truth.

^f 1. In. vii. 14.
^h 1. In. 10. 30.
ⁱ 20. Luke i. 31.
^h 31. ii. 11. Rom.
ⁱ 3. 4. ix. 5.
^h 1. Cor. xv. 47.
ⁱ Gal. iv. 4. Phil.
^h 1. 6. 8. 1 Tim.
ⁱ 11. 16. Heb. ii. 14.
^h 17. x. 5. 1 John iv. 2. 3. 2 John 7. — g. ii. 11. x. 40. xii. 40. al.
ⁱ xiv. 9. 1e. xl. 5. 110. 2. ix. 1. 2. Matt. xvii. 1—5. 2 Cor. iv. 2—6. Heb. i. 3. 1 Pet. iv.
^h 4. 7. 2 Pet. i. 17. — h. 18. iii. 16. 18. 19. 2. Acts xiii. 33. Heb. i. 5 v. 5 1 John iv.
ⁱ 9. — i. 16. 17. 2 Cor. xii. 9. Eph. iii. 8. 18. 19. Col. i. 19. 1 Tim. i. 14—15.

15 ^f John ^k bare witness of him, and cried, saying. This was he of whom I spake. He that cometh after me is preferred before me; for ^h he was before me.

^k 7. 8. 29—31. iii.
^h 26—36. v. 31—
ⁱ 36. Matt. iii. 1.
^h Mark. 7. Luke
ⁱ iii. 16.
^h 1. 2. 30. vii. 38.
ⁱ xvi. 5. Prov.
^h viii. 22. 15. ix.
ⁱ 6. Mic. v. 2.
^h Phil. ii. 6. 7.
ⁱ 11. 17. 18. ii. 8.

Col. i. 17. Heb. xiii. 8. Rev. i. 6. 17. 18. ii. 8.

though the Jews in general rejected and crucified the Lord of glory, yet there was a remnant of them, and a vast multitude of the Gentiles, who welcomed him as their Redeemer and King. To all these he gave the power, privilege or dignity, of becoming the children of God; that being adopted into his family, and made partakers of his fatherly compassion, care, and affection, they might reverence, love, trust, and obey him, with delight, as his beloved children. This "receiving of Christ" was indeed equivalent to "believing in his name," that is, to a cordial belief of the divine testimony concerning his personal dignity and excellency, the end of his coming into the world, his mediatorial character, and his salvation; with a reliance on him for all the blessings which he came to bestow on lost sinners. These children of God are born into his family, not by any natural descent from the blood of Abraham, or by their own *natural* choice, as fallen creatures, whose will is "carnal and who are sold under sin;" nor does it arise from the will of man respecting them; (as men, who have no children, sometimes choose persons of distinguished excellency, whom they adopt as their heirs;) for no man can ensure the conversion of his dearest friends or relatives; no minister can choose who shall, or even conjecture before-hand who will profit by his ministry; nay, the most unlikely persons are very frequently thus distinguished. For they are "born of God," according to his purpose, by an immediate operation of his Holy Spirit, producing in them a new nature, renewing them to the divine Image, and inclining them to choose and delight in the spiritual excellency of the things of God. Thus new creatures are formed and brought into the spiritual world, to be nourished up, by the word of sound doctrine, to a complete meetness for the inheritance of the children of God in heaven. This new birth is the preparation for receiving Christ and believing in his name, without which they would still continue to despise and reject him. (*Marg. Ref.*) The difference between *regeneration* and *adoption*, as noticed in these verses, deserves peculiar attention. They, who are "born of God" receive Christ, and to those who receive him he gives the privilege of becoming the sons of God. The former is regeneration, or a change in their nature; the latter is adoption, or a change in their state; and when thus regenerated and adopted, they receive "the Spirit of adoption." (*Notes, Rom. viii. 14—17. Gal. iv. 6, 7. Eph. i. 5—3.*)

V. 14. The evangelist next proceeds to show in what manner "the Word came to his own;" "He was made flesh," or *became flesh*; that is, he assumed our entire nature into a personal union with the Deity; "He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh;" he became man, and subjected himself to all those infirmities which sin gave rise to, as far as he could without being polluted by sin. He became flesh, as he became liable to hunger, thirst, weariness, pain, suffering and death. He "was

"God, and with God from the beginning;" at length he became man, and was with man: he was in the form of God, and he became in fashion as a man. This was effected by the miraculous conception and birth of Jesus the Son of Mary, who was incomprehensibly, yet really and inseparably, one Person with the Eternal Word. We cannot explain this; nor can we understand the union between the body and soul in our own persons. "But the testimony of God is sure, and giveth wisdom to the simple;" this testimony declares "that the Word was made flesh;" and that he "tabernacled among us," as the shechinah, or divine glory, dwelt in the tabernacle in the wilderness; so that "the Word of God," yea, "God the Word," condescended to dwell here on earth in human nature, and visibly to display his glory for many years; being "full of grace and truth," accomplishing the types, predictions, and promises of the Old Testament; exercising all kinds of condescension, compassion, love, and mercy to mankind; communicating all grace to those who sought to him for it; and showing himself ever full of kindness and truth, in the blessed instructions which he continually gave to those around him, concerning the things of God and the eternal world. Indeed this glory was veiled under his external poverty and deep humility, from the view of carnal men; but the apostles and others, who were enabled to believe in his name, beheld the glory of his power, wisdom, knowledge, holiness, truth, and grace; and they were assured that they were such as became the character and Person of "the only begotten of the Father." (*Note, 18.*) Some reference may here also be had to his transfiguration, of which the evangelist was an eye-witness.

V. 15. The evangelist next shows how the things which he had stated accorded to what John the Baptist had testified respecting Jesus. When he first saw him, (for this seems to refer to the time when Jesus came to be baptized by him,) he proclaimed aloud, that this was the person, whom he had announced to the people as about to appear among them. As to the order of time, and his entrance on his work, "he came after John;" but in every other way he had been and would be "preferred before him." Indeed it was most reasonable that he should be thus preferred, "For he was before him." John was the elder man, and it does not appear what sense can be made of this expression, (30.) except we allow, that Jesus existed before he appeared on earth as man, whereas John had no previous existence: for if John had only meant to declare the *superiority* of Jesus, he must, according to all the rules of language, have said, "He is before me," not "He was before me." Besides, this would have been no more than a repetition of his foregoing assertion, when it is evidently introduced as a reason for it. *Preferred, &c.* This is properly said of those who are placed in rank before others, as masters, whom their attendants follow.

xxxv. 1-5 Matt.
 xli. 11, 14 Luke
 xli. 1 Acts ii
 12-16 Rom
 vi. 1 Cor i
 4, 5 Eph iv 8
 12, Col ii 3
 1 Pet i 11
 2 Zech i 7
 45 ix 29 Acts vii 38 xxxvii 23
 10-12 17 Heb. ix 5, x xvii 6-12
 10 18 xxix 14 xxvii 2 Mic i 20
 21-26 xv 8-12 2 Cor. i 20 Heb. ix 22 x 4-10 xi 33, 10 Rev. v 6-11 vii. 9-17.

16 And ^m of his fulness have all we received, ⁿ and grace for grace.

17 For ^o the law was given by Moses, but ^p grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

‘It signifies a more honourable situation, and, by consequence, superior dignity.’ (*Beza*.) The parallel passages, where another word is used, confirm this interpretation. (*Marg. Ref.*) Jesus came to John, and was baptized by him, as if he meant to be his disciple: but John gave place to him; assigned him the foremost station; in the most decided manner owned him as his Lord; and pointed him out to his disciples as the promised Messiah. —*Before me*. ‘This I said, because he indeed was before me, as being “in the beginning with God.”’ (*Whitby*.) (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 16. This, and the two following verses, are considered, by some expositors, as the words of the evangelist resuming his subject from the fourteenth verse; and not as a continuation of John the Baptist’s testimony. (*Note*, 14.) The doctrine, however, is the same, and grounded on the same divine authority, whoever be the speaker. The Baptist and the Evangelist, the prophets and the apostles, had received, (and all believers from the beginning to the end of the world must receive,) all their wisdom, knowledge, strength, and grace, from the fulness of Christ: they have nothing of their own, but sin, weakness, folly, and misery: they have nothing from God, but as it is communicated through his Son, the eternal Word, either in consequence of his engagements, as the Surety of the new covenant, or of his actual incarnation, and the work which he accomplished on earth. In him is a *fulness* of life, light, wisdom, power, grace, and truth; all fulness dwells in him, even “all the fulness of the godhead “bodily;” from which alone fallen sinners have been, are, and shall be receiving, by faith, all that renders them wise, strong, holy, useful, or happy. “And grace for “grace;” this may signify a vast abundance of all spiritual blessings most freely bestowed from the fulness of Christ; even *grace upon grace*: or that each believer receives a measure of every kind of grace, which is treasured up in Christ for his people, fully adequate, and answerable to all his wants; or, that by the grace received from Christ, they are renewed into his image, and reflect every holy excellency that appeared in his character; even as the melted wax receives, line for line, and letter for letter, the exact impression from the seal that is put upon it. The words of our Lord, “To him that hath shall be given, “and he shall have abundantly,” seem also referred to. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 17. The Jews trusted in Moses, glorying that they were his disciples: and indeed he was an eminent prophet of God, who was employed to give the law to Israel; both the moral law, the perfect standard of holiness, and the ceremonial law, which was a shadow of the grace of the Gospel: but the former is the ministration of condemnation to transgressors, and the latter had no inherent efficacy to take away the guilt or power of sin; and therefore both, as forming one complex dispensation, were intended to

18 No man ^q hath seen God at any ^r time; ^s the only begotten Son, which is ^t in the bosom of the Father, ^u he hath declared him.

‘lead men to Christ, and could do nothing to save those who did not believe in him, though excellently fitted to the purposes for which God appointed them. These “came “by Moses.” “But grace and truth came by Jesus “Christ;” all the mercy shown to sinners in pardoning and justifying them; all the grace by which they are sanctified, and taught repentance, faith, and holiness; all the favour in any way ever vouchsafed to the race of fallen Adam from the beginning; “came by Jesus,” the promised Messiah: all the faithful promises, given and performed to the Church of believers, and all the ancient prophecies and types, had reference to him, and were verified in him. He was the Truth of all the Shadows, the Substance of all the promises, the Object of all the prophecies, the Centre of all the doctrines, the Source and Standard of truth, and the Medium of communication of all the grace and blessings, that ever were made to, or conferred on, fallen man. As soon as Adam sinned the divine Saviour stepped in, as it were, between him and the avenging sword of justice; and the promised Seed, “as the Seed of the woman,” undertook to be the Surety of a new covenant to his people. He was “the end of the law for righteousness to every “believer,” in every age. Through him alone sinners have access to God as a Father, acceptance with him, or grace from him; and even their repentance, faith, and holiness, come from him alone. “Grace and truth;” “As the moral law pointed out the disease which Christ “cures, and the ceremonial law shadowed forth that which “Christ indeed performed: therefore *grace* answers, by “way of contrast, to the moral law, and *truth* to the ceremonial.’ (*Beza*.)

V. 18. As one instance in which “Truth came by “Jesus Christ,” the sacred writer assures us, that all true and useful knowledge of God was always derived to man through him. No man ever did, or can, see the divine essence; but all the declarations concerning him, all the discoveries of his Being, perfections, truth, and will, have been made to men by the Son, who was, is, and ever shall be, with the Father, as in his bosom, the object of his entire and ineffable love and delight; knowing his infinite excellency, and sharing all his counsels and purposes, and revealing them to man, as far as it is proper that they should be known by him. (*Notes. &c. Matt. xi. 25-27.*) We have frequently had occasion to observe, that, from the beginning, every discovery of God to man, and all the visions and displays of JEHOVAH to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Isaiah, and others, were made by the eternal Son, who afterwards became incarnate, being anticipations of that event: nor can those *appearances* of God be reconciled with this, and similar declarations, on any other principle. (*Note*, 1 Tim. vi. 16.) —According to this testimony, no man really knows any thing of God to good purpose, as to the mysteries of his nature, and the glory and harmony of his attributes, but he,

xxv. 20-36 Deut. u
xxiv. 9-11, 12
xxiv. 8. Matt.
xxi. 23-31.
xx. 24. Acts xiii
25. xix. 4.

v. iii. 22-26.
Mark i. 7, 8
Luke iii. 15-17

Mal. iv. 5. Mat.
x. 41. xvii. 10
-12 Luke i. 17.
a 25. vii. 40. Deut.
xxviii. 15-18
Matt. xi. 9-11
xvi. 14.
b Or, a prophet.
c 2 Sam. xxiv.
11

c 10. 23. Mat. iii.
3. Mark i. 1.
Luke i. 16, 17.
76-79. lxx 4-6.

19 ¶ And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, * Who art thou?

20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, y I am not the Christ.

21 And they asked him, What then? * Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. * Art thou * that prophet? And he answered, No.

22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? ^b that we may give an answer to them that sent us: what sayest thou of thyself?

23 He said, ^c I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight

the way of the Lord, ^d as said the prophet Esaias.

24 And they which were sent ^e were of the Pharisees.

25 And they asked him, and said unto him, ^f Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not ^g that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

26 John answered them, saying, ^h I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, ⁱ whom ye know not.

27 He it is, ^j who coming after me is preferred before me, ^k whose shoes I latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

28 These things were done in ^l Bethabara beyond Jordan, ^m where John was baptizing.

Is. xl. 3-5

ii. 1. 2. vii. 47
-49. Mat. xxiii.
15-18. 26. Luke
vii. 30. xi. 30-31.
44. 53. xvi. 14.
Acts xxviii. 6.
iii. 5. 6. Phil.
iii. 5. 6.

f Matt. xxi. 23.
Acts iv. 5-7 v.
29.

g 20-22. Dan ix.
24-26.

h Matt. iii. 11.
Mark i. 8. Luke
iii. 16. Acts i. 5.
xii. 16.

i 10. 11. viii. 19.
xvi. 5. xvii. 3.
25. Mat. iii. 1.
2. 1 John iii. 1.

k 15. 30. Acts xix.
13.
l Matt. iii. 11.
Mark i. 7. Luke
iii. 16.
m x. 40. Juag. viii.
24. Bethabara.
n ii. 2.

who receives his knowledge by faith in the Son of God.—‘From Christ alone, all true knowledge of God is derived.’ (Beza.) It is, however, doubted by many, who steadfastly maintain the doctrine of our Lord’s deity, and of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, whether the title of “the Son of God,” relates to any thing more than his human nature, his miraculous conception, and his mediatorial character and work; and the opinion of former orthodox divines on this subject seems to be given up by them as unscriptural. Now it is allowed, that many have speculated, explained, and disputed, a great deal too much concerning these mysteries, of which we can know no more than is revealed; and it must also be remembered, that such relative terms as Father and Son, when applied to the Deity, can only be used in a figurative sense, in order to help our feeble apprehensions; and therefore they must not be made the foundation of any conclusions, inconsistent with the eternity, self-existence, and co-equality of “the Word.” Yet I apprehend, that Christ is called in Scripture “the only begotten Son of God,” and “the Son of the Father,” in respect of his divine nature; and that he is the Son of God, by ‘a generation that none can declare.’ Various expressions concerning the love of God in giving his Son for us, seem to refer not to his giving him to death, when incarnate; but to his giving him to be incarnate, for that purpose. “He spared not his own Son,” (ἑαυτοῦ) and this gift was so vast, that the apostle counted all other things to be as nothing in comparison of it. Indeed it does not appear why he should be called “the only begotten Son of God,” merely in respect of his human nature; for the formation of Adam, and of all the angels, was a production equally immediate and divine, as that of the human nature of Christ; and “the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,” (14.) seems evidently to relate to his divine, and not to his human nature. In short, it seems to denote something incomprehensible, and infinitely superior to creation, and to every thing of which we have the most remote conception, that constitutes an equality of nature, and a relation between the eternal Father and the Son, of which that relation among men is but a feeble shadow, yet suited to

help our conceptions about it. Perhaps we should never have been informed of the distinction of persons in the godhead, but on account of the æconomy of the work of redemption: or, to speak more properly, that work seems to have been planned, in order to a display of the glory of God, as well in this distinction of persons, as in the harmony of his attributes. The apprehensions of the most exalted creatures on such a subject must be inadequate. Ours must needs at present be also confused and defective. The second person in the sacred Trinity may be spoken of as “the only begotten Son;” as he is appointed in the eternal counsels to be the Image, Representative, and Revealer, of the invisible God, to man, in every age, and under every dispensation; and our conception of him as the Son should doubtless be confined to his participation of the divine nature, and his representing it to man; so that “he who hath seen the Son, hath seen the Father also.” This will appear with increasing evidence as we proceed with this Gospel.

V. 19—28. The evangelist next relates a more public testimony of John Baptist to Christ. The chief priests, scribes, and great council of the nation, who regarded themselves as entitled to superintend religious matters, having heard reports concerning John and his doctrine, baptism, and popularity, sent a deputation to him, to know, Who he was, and whether he professed to be the promised Messiah; as he presumed to preach and collect disciples, without authority from them? To this John answered in the most explicit manner, that he was not the Messiah. Being further interrogated whether he was Elias, whom the Jews expected to come personally from heaven, before the Messiah made his appearance; he declared that he was not. He was not personally Elias, though he came in the spirit and power of that zealous reformer; and though he was a prophet, yea, more than a prophet, yet he was not Jeremiah, or any of their old prophets, risen from the dead, as they expected. When they further demanded who he was, that they might carry some determinate answer to the sanhedrim, by which they were sent; he referred them to a prophecy concerning him, that hath been considered. (Notes, Is. xl. 3—8.)

36 Gen xlii 7.
8 Ex xii 33c
Num xviii 9
10 Is lvi 7.
Acts vii 32. 1 Pet i 19 Rev. v. 6, 12, 13, vi. 1, 16, vii. 9, 10, 14, 17, xii. 11, xiii. 3.
xlv. 1, 4, 10, xv. 3, xvii 14, xix. 7, 9, 14, 22, 23, 27, xxii. 1-3.

29 ¶ The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, ° Behold the

Lamb of God, ° which ° taketh away the sin of the world !

4 Jhn. 13 1 Tim. ii 6 Tit. ii 14 Heb. i 3 H 17 ix. 23. 1 Pet. ii 24, iii 10, 1 John 1 2 iii 5 iv. 10. Rev. i 5 ——— Or. *Barth* Ex. xlviii 32 Lev. x. 17, xvi. 6, 22 Num. xviii 1, 23.

He was the voice of a herald in the desert, calling upon men to prepare the way of JEHOVAH, who was about to come among them; and when, as a voice, he had signified the mind of the Lord, who spake by him, he should vanish and be no more considered. But as the persons sent at this time were Pharisees, and very tenacious of their ancient customs and traditions; and as they did not know that this prophecy was parallel to that of Malachi, which they had referred to; they proceeded to demand of John, why he baptized his own countrymen, and made disciples, if he were neither the Messiah, nor Elias, nor an old prophet risen again? To this he replied, that he baptized the people with water, as a profession of repentance, and an outward sign of the spiritual blessings to be conferred on them by the Messiah, who had not indeed yet publicly avowed himself; but he was in the midst of them, though they knew him not, and ready to enter on his work. Indeed, this was the Person, who, as he had always declared, was preferred before him; being, in fact, so much his superior in dignity, authority, and excellency, that he was not worthy to perform the lowest menial service for him. (*Marg. Ref.*) *That prophet.* (25.) ‘They evidently distinguished *that prophet*, of whom they inquired, from Christ: the opinion, therefore, of Chrysostom, Cyril, and Theophylact, does not displease me. They declare that the Jews were under an error, supposing, not only that Elias, but also that “the prophet like unto Moses,” being distinct from the Messiah, would come before him. This seems to be confirmed by what follows.” (vi. 14. vii. 40, 41.) (*Beza.*) Either “the prophet like unto Moses” was intended, or one of the ancient prophets as arisen from the dead: for John would hardly have denied that he was a prophet, (*Luke i. 76.*) It is not, however, clear that any particular prophet was meant: yet it is evident that the Jews in general paid far less regard to those Scriptures, which related to the prophetic and priestly office of the Messiah, than they did to those, which foretold him as a glorious King: and this made way for many of the errors and carnal expectations, which led them to reject the Lord of glory. Bethabara seems to have been the place where Israel passed over Jordan into Canaan.

V. 29. The preceding testimony of John is supposed to have been given, whilst Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, and just before his return. On the next day John saw Jesus coming to him; and he immediately pointed him out to his hearers, as the *Lamb of God*. The paschal lamb, in the shedding and sprinkling of its blood, the roasting and eating of its flesh, and all the attendant circumstances, aptly represented the redemption of man by the death of Christ, and the salvation of penitent sinners by faith in his blood: and those lambs, which were sacrificed every morning and evening, as expiations of the sins of Israel, were evident types of “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” (*Marg. Ref.*) The emblem of a lamb might denote the purity, gentleness, harmlessness, and patience of the Redeemer, and his

valuableness and usefulness, living and dying; but especially his fitness to be a spotless sacrifice to God for the sins of his people. He is called “the Lamb of God;” as he was a sacrifice which God himself required, provided, and accepted. As a Lamb he taketh away sin, by being made an expiatory oblation; that justice might be satisfied, and yet the sinner pardoned. The lambs, sacrificed according to the law, were appropriated to the nation of Israel; but the atonement of Christ, being of infinite value, extends its efficacy to all nations and to every generation of men. A lamb could not take away sin, except by becoming a sacrifice: and why should John call Christ “the Lamb of God,” in this connexion, if he did not really atone for the sins of men, by bearing the punishment due to them? ‘Grotius refers this to the reformation of men’s lives; whereas it plainly respects the Lamb slain as a peculiar Victim, to redeem us to God by his blood. To illustrate this, let it be noted, that when a sacrifice was offered for sin, he that brought it laid his hand upon the head of the victim, according to the command of God; (*Lev. i. 4. iii. 2. iv. 4.*) and by that rite transferred his sins upon the victim, who is said to take them upon him and carry them away. Accordingly, in the daily sacrifice of the lamb, the stationary men, saith Dr. Lightfoot, who were the representatives of the people, laid their hands on the lambs thus offered for them. When therefore the Baptist had said, he baptized them for the remission of sins; he here shows them by what means that remission was to be obtained.’ (*Whitby.*) ‘We are often told, that repentance and reformation are fully sufficient to restore the most abandoned sinners to the favour of a just and merciful God, and to avert the punishment due to their offences. But what does the great herald and forerunner of Christ say to this? He came professedly as a *preacher of repentance*. If then repentance alone had sufficient efficacy for the expiation of sin, surely we should have heard this from him, who came on purpose to preach repentance. But what is the case? Does he tell us that repentance *alone* will take away the guilt of our transgressions, and justify us in the eyes of our Maker? Quite the contrary. Notwithstanding the great stress he justly lays on the indispensable necessity of repentance, yet he tells his followers at the same time, that it was to Christ *only*, and to his death, that they were to look for the pardon of their sins. “Behold,” says he, “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” And again, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” (*Bp. Porteus.*) Thus the Saviour “taketh away the sin of the world,” by removing every hinderance to the forgiveness of the sin, original and actual, of all men throughout the world, who are brought to rely on him by humble faith. Through his atoning sacrifice, it consists with the glory of God to pardon all such persons. On this ground any man may come to the throne of grace for all the blessings of salvation, pur

V. 35—42. The persons here spoken of were John's disciples before they followed Jesus. Whilst John stood and discoursed with them, Jesus came near them, and John immediately pointed him out to them as "the Lamb of God." Accordingly they followed Jesus, as desirous of becoming his disciples, or of being acquainted with him. To facilitate and encourage their application, Jesus turned to inquire what they sought? And, addressing him by the honourable title of Rabbi, or Teacher, they asked where he dwelt; as they wanted to come to him for his instruction? He therefore invited them to accompany him; (for he seems to have had some retired lodging near the place where John preached:) and, as it was but two hours before sun-set, they spent the remainder of the day in attending to his instructive conversation. Some think that the evangelist himself was one of these two disciples, but that is uncertain: however, Andrew, Peter's brother, was the other, who, being fully convinced that Jesus was the promised Messiah, first brought Peter acquainted with him. This was a considerable time before they were

CHAP. II.

At a marriage in Cana Jesus turns water into wine, 1—11. He goes to Capernaum, 12; and thence to Jerusalem, where he drives the buyers and sellers

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—5.

Whilst we carefully avoid the error of those, who seem to place the whole of religion in an exact, orthodox creed, and who sacrifice every Christian temper, and violate the plain precepts of Scripture, in zealously and furiously contending for doctrinal notions, we should equally beware of the opposite extreme of treating the doctrines of Scripture as speculative points, of comparatively little consequence. To the person of Christ, as the Foundation of all true godliness, bear all the apostles and prophets witness; yea, God himself hath testified, "that he sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world." Let us, then, beware of those that degrade Him, whom the Spirit of truth and holiness delights to glorify: and whilst we allow the mystery to be, without controversy, great and inexplicable; let us still hold it fast, yea, glory in it, as "the great mystery of godliness," with which all true piety in the heart and life of sinful man is inseparably connected. Let us, then, never think of Him, whose name is called The "WORD of God," as any other, than "God over all, blessed for evermore;" as subsisting before all worlds with God, and himself God, co-equal with, yet distinct from, the eternal Father. Standing on these plain testimonies of Scripture, without indulging proud reasonings, or requiring curious explanations, let us avoid, with equal caution, those, who allow, indeed, the distinct personality, but deny, or interpret away, the proper Deity of the Word; and those, who zealously assert his Deity, but seem to lose sight of his distinct personality, and thus, unwarily, verge to the sentiments which they seem to oppose. It is not for us to comprehend such subjects, or to resolve all questions about them: but we can prove by conclusive arguments, which no infidel ever yet could, or ever will be able to answer, that the Scripture is a divine revelation: and we can fully show these mysterious doctrines to be contained in the express language of revelation. By faith we receive this testimony, and by grace we derive nourishment from it to our souls: but it is the most unreasonable thing in the world, to reject the testimony of the infinite God concerning his own mysterious existence, when every process of nature, (as we call it,) baffles our feeble powers; and when the best philosophers allow, that we can only know that things are so and so, but cannot comprehend the manner *how*, or the reason *why*, they are so! Indeed, he who knows the worth of his soul, the evil of sin, and other things pertaining to our present fallen condition, can see no ground of hope, but in the power, truth, and love of Him, "who made all things, and without whom was not any thing made that was made." This will be his encouragement "to hope and not be afraid, because God is become his salvation;" and "the Life

out of the temple, 13—17. He predicts his own death and resurrection, as the proof of his authority, 18—22. Many believe in him, because of his miracles; but he does not commit himself to them, as knowing what was in man, 23—25.

"of the world is become the Light of life to fallen men." Nothing can be more evident than these truths, as they are revealed in Scripture, by which the personal Word of God speaks to us; but this "Light still shineth in darkness," and the darkness comprehendeth it not:" every absurd system of soothing error from the pit of darkness is preferred to it, as more congenial to the pride and lusts of men. Thus they walk on still in darkness, and neither understand nor value the Light of the World! May we, then, pray, without ceasing, that our eyes may be opened to behold this Light, that we may walk in it; and thus be made wise unto eternal salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.

V. 6—13.

Many have, in different ages, been sent from God to bear witness to the truth, that all men through them might believe; and these have "shone as lights in the world:" but every one of them hath been ready to confess, that all their light was a reflection of the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, "the true Light, that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world:" and all that boasted illumination, which is set up in opposition to him, will infallibly lead men down to everlasting darkness and despair. But what multitudes, not only of his creatures, but even of his professed disciples, refuse to welcome the condescending Saviour of the world! Too wise to submit to his teaching, too proud of their goodness to rely on his merits, too fond of their own will to be subject to his commands, they reject him in each of his offices; or, like Gallio, they care for none of these things: and should he come in person again on earth, he would be despised by multitudes, who could see no glory in him, and who would feel no need of him. But there are those at present, also, who have other views and desires: who, conscious of their ignorance, guilt, pollution, and slavery to sin and Satan, gladly receive him as their Prophet, Priest, King, Redeemer, Physician, and Saviour: they believe his word, and rely on his truth, power, and love. He is to them the Pearl of great price, and they would sell all to purchase him; and, having once received him, they are ever desirous of renewing and ratifying that important transaction. To this chosen remnant the Saviour gives the glorious privilege of becoming the children of God; and he will surely preserve them, and prepare them for the everlasting inheritance reserved for them in heaven. These happy souls are not found in one family, sect, or nation; they are not selected by the partiality of ministers or pious friends; they are not chosen because of their previous excellency; but they are "born of God." Then they begin to fear God, to mourn for sin, to believe, to hope, to pray, to perceive the preciousness of Christ, and gladly to embrace his salvation.

^a 43
^b Gen i. 27. 28
^c 18 - 25. Ps
 cxviii. 1-3
^d Prov xviii. 22
^e xix. 14. xxix. 10
 -12 Eph v. 30-33 1 Tim. iv. 1-3. Heb. xiii. 4. — c iv. 46. xxi. 2. Josh. xix. 20.
 Kaneh.

AND ^a the third day there was ^b a marriage in ^c Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there.

V. 14—18.

To unbelievers, there appears in Christ no beauty, that they should desire him: but all, who truly believe, adore the infinite condescension of the eternal Word, who was made flesh to tabernacle among us. They discern some glimpses of his glory, as of "the only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;" they value the unsearchable riches, and inexhaustible fulness, which are laid up in him: they see that "He is the Chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely;" worthy to be admired, adored, and loved, far beyond all the sons of earth and heaven; and that "from his fulness all have received." They, therefore, consider prophets, apostles, martyrs, and saints, as so many monuments erected to the Redeemer's glory, and so many encouragements to apply to him, who is able to render, them also wise, holy, useful, and happy; and to furnish them with every kind and degree of grace, which may enable them to "shine as lights in the world," and to live to the glory of his name. Indeed, we should value every discovery of the perfections, truth, and will of **JEHOVAH**: his law is holy, just, and good, and was given for most important purposes; and we should endeavour to make the proper use of it. But we cannot, from it, have pardon, righteousness, or strength: it may recommend, and then teach us to adorn the Gospel; but it cannot supply the place of it. No mercy comes from God to sinners, but through Jesus Christ; "no man can come to the Father, but by him;" no man can know God, except as the only begotten Son reveals him. Ignorance, delusion, condemnation, and unmitigated wrath, must be the portion of every man, who rejects the Word and Son of God, the great Substance and Centre of all the promises, and the Life and Soul of all doctrines, ordinances, and precepts, whatsoever.

V. 19—34.

Let us regard the testimony of John. He was filled "with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb;" he was "great in the sight of God," and one of the most excellent of mere men; yet had he nothing to say "of himself," save that he was the voice of a herald, to "proclaim the Saviour's glory;" being unworthy even to "loose the latchet of his shoes." He knew that Jesus was *before him*, as the eternal Word; that he would for ever be preferred before him, and all creatures; and that he alone could pardon sin, or baptize with the Holy Ghost. He thought he could not enough abase himself or exalt his Lord: he only desired to prepare his ways, and to manifest him to Israel. Let us then not at all regard those, who exalt themselves and degrade Christ; for their light is darkness, and their wisdom madness, being directly in opposition to the wisdom of God and the Light of the world. But let us especially behold Jesus "as the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." Sin

2 And ^d both Jesus was called, and ^e his disciples, to the marriage.

3 And when ^f they wanted wine, the

^c Matt. x. 40-42. xxv. 40-45. — 1 Ps. civ. 15. Ec. x. 19. Is. xxiv. 11. Matt. xxvi. 28.

must be taken away, or sinners must be ruined: "God hath provided himself a Lamb for a burnt-offering," through whose infinitely valuable atonement he can be "just, and the justifier of the ungodly." Let sinners then behold and trust in him: let believers look to him continually for renewing pardon, peace, strength, encouragement, motives, instructions, righteousness; and a perfect example of holy meekness, patience, and love. Thus guilt will be removed from the conscience, and sin will be taken away from the heart, till no more remain there. And whilst we look to him for pardon, let us also earnestly seek to be made like him, and to partake of his baptism by the Holy Ghost, that we may abound in all holy fruits, to the glory of his name.

V. 35—51.

The ministers of Christ must never desire to make disciples to themselves, but to him: they, who are inquiring after salvation, must learn to hearken to those teachers who direct them to "the Lamb of God," and to distinguish them from all others; and they, who have known him to their comfort and profit, should endeavour to recommend him to their friends and neighbours; that the Light may diffuse itself more widely in families, cities, and countries. All, who desire to profit by the word of God, must beware of narrow prejudices against places, or denominations of men, from which even pious Christians are by no means exempt: they should come and examine for themselves; and then perhaps they will find good where they expected none. But let us seek and pray to be "Christians indeed, in whom there is no guile." Defects and infirmities will be found in all; but hypocrisy and guile belong not to a believer's character. He does not profess one thing with his lips, and think another in his heart; he is not a double-minded or deceitful man: it is peculiar to him, to allow of nothing before God which he disavows before men, to pretend to nothing before men, which God knows that he does not aim to perform. He is *conscientiously*, as well as *by confession*, a poor sinner, who has no hope of deliverance from condemnation or pollution, but through the mercy and grace of God in Christ; and whilst he seeks free salvation, he really aims and desires to lead a sober, righteous, and godly life, and is continually abased before God, because he cannot do the things that he would. He who seeth in secret observes and approves this disposition, and hears the retired supplications which it dictates. He marks the humble believer, when beseeching him to teach him his truth and will; and he will evince that he accepts of such petitions. Thus the believer obtains "the witness in himself," that "Jesus is the Son of God, and the King of Israel;" and he will attain continually to fuller discoveries of his glory, and larger communications from him, till he learns to "love his appearing," in his own glory, and in the glory of the Father, with all his holy angels, when he will render unto every man according to his works.

xxi 3 Phil iv 8
 h. xxi 26, 27 xxi
 10. Matt xx
 2
 1 Deut xxviii 3
 2. xxi cxi 10
 Luke ii 49 2
 Cor v 16 Gal
 ii 9 6
 k. xii 6 20. viii.
 20 xxi 20 xxi.
 1 Ec. iii. 1.
 1. Gen. i. 6
 2. Job. xxi
 14. Luke vi 46
 15. 1 Cor. xiv 6
 Heb. v 7 xxi 8
 m. 15 Mark vii
 2. 3. 1 Tim. v 20
 Heb. vi 2 ix.
 10-19 x. 22
 n. 5 5. 1 Tim. xxi
 7. 8. Job. vi 3
 3. 1 Kings
 20. 19 2 Kings
 19 2. 6. 10-
 14. Mark xxi
 1. 17 Acts
 viii 20. 26
 o. Prov. iii. 6.
 9

mother of Jesus saith unto him, * They have no wine.

4 Jesus saith unto her, ^b Woman, what have I to do with thee? ^c mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the servants, ^d Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

6 And there were set there six water-pots of stone, ^e after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins a-piece.

7 Jesus saith unto them, ^f Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, ^g Draw out

now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was, (but the servants which drew the water knew,) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; ^h and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: ⁱ but thou hast kept the good wine until now.

11 This ^j beginning of miracles ^k did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and ^l manifested forth his glory; and ^m his disciples believed on him.

p. Gen. xliii. 36
 Cant. v. 1-6
 1 Prov. ix 1-6
 16-18 Luke
 xvi 15. Rev.
 vii 16. 17
 r. 17 Ex. iv. 9
 vii 19-21 Ec
 ix 7 Mal. ii 2.
 2 Cor. iv 17.
 Gal. iii 10-13.
 s. 1. 50 51 iii 2.
 17 45
 t. 11 v 23 xii
 xi. xiv 9-11.
 18 Deut v 24
 Pa. ix. 15
 xvi. 3. Is. xl
 2 2 Cor. iii. 16
 vi. 5.
 u. 1. 15 x. 30.
 vi. 1 John v 13

NOTES.

CHAP. II. V. 1-5. On the third day after our Lord's interview with Nathanael, or after his return into Galilee, a marriage was solemnized at Cana, a small town in that neighbourhood, called Cana of Galilee, to distinguish it from another, in the lot of Ephraim. (*Josh. xvi. 8. xvii. 9.*) Probably Mary was nearly related to one of the parties, for she seems to have been present as one of the family; and as Joseph is not mentioned, either on this occasion, or afterwards, we may suppose that he died before our Lord entered on his public ministry. Jesus had now collected a few disciples, and both he and they were invited to the marriage-feast; and in order to honour God's institution, as well as to show the free and social spirit of his religion, he was pleased to accept of the invitation. Perhaps they had not been previously expected, and our Lord's presence might also draw others thither to hear his conversation; so that all the wine provided for the occasion was soon spent; and it is probable that the persons concerned were not affluent, nor well able to bear any additional expense. Mary, therefore, stated the case to her Son, as under some concern about it, and with expectation of his providing a miraculous supply. Some expositors think, that he had before wrought miracles in private, to supply the necessities of the family; but this is highly improbable; and the circumstances of his conception and birth, could not but lead his mother to expect extraordinary things from him, when he entered on his public ministry. But Jesus replied to her in a manner, which showed that she was in some measure reprehensible, in supposing that her authority or influence were to be employed, in directing his conduct as the Messiah. There is not, indeed, the least disrespect in the language, with which he addressed her; as the greatest princesses were accosted even by their servants in the same manner among the ancients; and he afterwards used it, when speaking from the cross, with the most endeared affection and tenderness; (*Marg. Ref.*) yet the whole reply was an evident and intentional discouragement to her from interposing on such occasions. In this respect, "what had he to do with her?" or with any other? None must dictate to him, when, or for whom, he should work miracles: "His time

"was not yet come." The time of his open appearance, as the Messiah, was not yet completely arrived, and a public miracle was not expedient. The occasion on which this miracle was wrought, the miracle itself, and this answer of our Lord to Mary, seem to have been expressly intended as a prophetic protest against the superstitions and idolatries of the church of Rome; especially against two leading branches of that system, namely, the disparaging and prohibiting of marriage, and the worship of the Virgin Mary. Even to this day there are those who call on her, *not to beseech, but to command*, her Son, now that he fills the throne of glory; though in his lowest humiliation on earth he would not even allow her to counsel him! Mary, however, did not give up her hope of a miraculous supply, though she saw the propriety of not urging it; and therefore, she ordered the servants carefully to observe his directions, whatever they might be.

V. 6-11. The Jews had vessels in their houses, to keep water always ready for the ceremonial washings prescribed by the law, as well as for the observance of the purifications enjoined by the traditions of the elders. It is not agreed how much these water-pots contained a-piece; but on the lowest computation the six must have held a hogshead. Our Lord was pleased to order the servants to fill them with water, by which they became unexceptionable witnesses to the reality of the miracle; and, though they had doubtless a variety of other employments on this occasion, and the order might seem ill-timed and to no purpose, yet they obeyed without hesitation, and filled the water-pots to the brim! As soon as this was done, he bade them draw from them, and carry it to the ruler of the feast; and they obeyed without making the least objection, drawing out what they had just before put into the vessels as water, and carrying it to the ruler of the feast, to set before the guests, as wine? The ruler of the feast seems to have been a person chosen to maintain order on such occasions, as well as to see that all the guests had what they wanted; and some think that a Levite or priest was generally chosen for that purpose. When this person therefore had tasted of this fresh supply of wine, without knowing how it was procured, he found it so excellent, that he expressed his surprise to the bridegroom, at his

xvi 17 Matt iv.
13 xi 23
v vii 4-5 Matt
xii 55
26 Mark vi 5
Acts i 13, 14
1 Cor. ix. 5
Gal i 13.

220 v. i. vi. 4.
21 55 Ex xi
6-14 Num
xxv ii. 16-25
Deut xvi 14-18
16 Luke ii 41
1 Deut xiv 23-
26 Matt xxi
12 Mark xi
19 Luke xii 45, 46

2 xviii 6. Zech
vi 6 2 Cor. x

4 Is. lvi. 5-11
Jer vii 11. Hos
xii 7. 4. Matt
xxi 13. Mark
xii 17 Acts xix
24-27 1 Tim.
3. 16, 15
d v. 17, 18 viii
4. 29, 30 d
xx 17 Luke ii
49.

12 After this he went down to * Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples; and they continued there not many days.

13 ¶ And the Jews' ² passover was at hand; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

14 And ^a found in the temple those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money, sitting:

15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, ^b he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; ^c make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, ^e The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

18 ¶ Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, ^f What sign shewest thou unto us, ^g seeing that thou doest these things?

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, ^h Destroy this temple, ⁱ and in three days ^k I will raise it up.

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21 But ^l he spake of the ^m temple of his body.

22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, ⁿ his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; ^o and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

e Ps. lxxix. 9. exil.
138
f Acts 20 Mat. xii.
39. Mark. i. 4.
Mark. viii. 11.
g Luke x. 29.
h 1. 25. Mat. xxi.
23 Mark xi. 27.
28. Luke xx. 17.
2. Acts iv. 7. x.
28.
i Matt. xxvi. 60.
61. xxvii. 40.
Mark. xvi. 58.
k xv. 29.
l Matt. xlii. 40.
xxvii. 63.
m k. v. 19. k. 17, 19.
xi. 25. Mark
viii. 31. Acts ii.
24. 32. iii. 19.
26. Rom. iv. 24.
vi. 4. viii. 11.
1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.
12. Col. ii. 12.
1 Pet. iii. 18.
l i. 14. Gr. Col.
i. 19. 1. 9. iieb.
viii. 2.
m 1 Cor. iii. 16.
xi. 14. 2 Cor. vi.
10. Eph. i. 20.
22 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.
n 7. xii. 16. xiv.
26. xvi. 4. Luke
xxv. 7. 8. 44.
Acts xi. 16.
o 11. xx. 8, 9.

having acted so differently from what others used to do on such occasions: for it was customary to give them good wine, till they had drunk what was sufficient, and then that which was of a smaller and inferior quality, as most suitable to their situation: whereas he had kept the best wine till the last. The original word, which is rendered "have well drunk," is often used for men's drinking to intoxication; yet learned men have shown that it does not necessarily imply that idea, but merely a moderate exhilaration consistent with temperance. It may be further observed, that the words refer to the *general management of feasts*, and not to *any thing that took place on this occasion*; where we must be sure every circumstance was conducted with the utmost regard to temperance and propriety. The remainder of this wine would be an ample recompense to the new-married persons, for the entertainment of Jesus and his disciples. This was the beginning of Christ's miracles, by which he *manifestly displayed his glory*: an expression never used concerning the miracles of any prophet or apostle, and which could not properly have been used; for they were only instruments, the power being of God, and for the display of his glory: but Jesus wrought by his own power, as Emmanuel, and displayed "his own glory, as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." This miracle, however, was not wrought publicly, or generally made known: yet it served to confirm the faith of the disciples in him, as the Son of God and the promised Messiah.

V. 12. This preceded John's imprisonment. Our Lord on this occasion visited Capernaum, and continued a few days there with his disciples and brethren, before he ascended to Jerusalem to keep the approaching passover: but after John was imprisoned, he went to *reside* at Capernaum.

V. 14-17. This was evidently a distinct transaction from that which has before been considered: (*Notes, Matt. xxi. 12, 13*;) for it took place at the first passover after Jesus entered on his public ministry; which he almost began and ended by purging the temple from the mercenary

traders, whom the covetous priests and rulers encouraged to make a market-place of its courts. Considering the immense number of sacrifices used at the feast of the passover, it must have been a very large fair that was there held, and a vast multitude of people must have been assembled and employed: yet Jesus, appearing as a poor man, at that time but little known, without human authority, without attendants or arms, except a scourge made of the small cords which were used in confining the cattle, drove them all before him; overturning the tables of those who exchanged foreign for current coin, and clearing the place of them; though we may be sure that pride, avarice, resentment, and every corrupt passion, would have disposed them to resistance, if they had not been over-awed and over-powered! In ordering those who sold doves to remove them, that they might no longer render the house of God a house of merchandise, he expressly called "God his Father;" and in a manner which evidently implied a claim to be the promised Messiah, the Son of God. When the disciples witnessed his courage and vehemency, his holy indignation, and disregard to opposition or reproach, in thus vindicating the courts of the temple from such an abominable profanation, and compared them with the general meekness and gentleness of his character, they recollected a passage, in which David, speaking as a type of the Messiah, and uttering many evident predictions of him, had said, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up;" or, "I am inwardly consumed by an earnest desire to purify thy sacred ordinances and thy holy habitation from every corruption; and can have no ease, till I have taken proper measures for that purpose;" and they readily perceived how applicable it was to the conduct of Jesus on this occasion. (*Ps. lxxix. 9.*)

V. 18-22. Though we can scarcely conceive of an action more evidential of a divine energy, or more undeniably right in itself, than the driving of the traders from the temple; yet the Jews, (probably the scribes, priests, and rulers,) demanded of Jesus some sign, or attestation, from heaven to his mission; seeing he presumed, in

Phil. 2 vi. 14. vii.
 1. viii. 20, 31.
 xii. 42, 43. Mat.
 xiii. 20, 21.
 Mark iv. 16, 17.
 Luke viii. 13.
 Gal. v. 6. Eph.
 iii. 16, 17. Jam.
 ii. 12, 20.
 1. vi. 12. Matt. x.
 16, 17.

23 ¶ Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast-day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

24 But Jesus did not commit him-

self unto them, because he knew all men,

25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

1. 42, 46, 47. v.
 43. vi. 44. xvi.
 30. xxi. 17.
 1 Sam. xvi. 7.
 1 Cor. xxiiv. 9.
 xxi. 17. Jer.
 xvii. 9, 10. Nat.
 ix. 4. Mark ii. 18.
 Act. 23. Heb.
 iv. 13. Rev. ii.
 23.

defiance of public authority, to act in this manner. In answer to this demand, he said, "Destroy this temple," and in three days I will rear it up again." Some think that he pointed to his body at the time; but as his disciples did not understand him till long afterwards, this is not likely. His opponents, however, treated his assertion with derision: forty-six years had elapsed from the time that Herod, the king, had begun to rebuild, or repair the temple; and though a vast number of hands had been employed, it was not yet completed; and would he alone presume to rebuild it, if destroyed, in the short space of three days! But he spake, not of the temple which was of man's building, but of his body, of which the temple was a type. The Jews would proceed in their enmity, till they had, as it were, demolished that temple by his crucifixion; and then on the third day he would raise it up again, and thus give the grand proof of his being the Son of God, and the promised Messiah. This explanation of the Evangelist contains two direct proofs of the Deity of Christ: his body was, in an especial sense, a temple, in which God dwelt, and in which he displayed his glory; and he declared that he would raise his body from the dead by his own power; yet doubtless "God raised him from the dead." After his resurrection his disciples remembered and understood this remarkable prediction; and when compared with its exact accomplishment, it confirmed their faith in him as the Messiah, and in the Scriptures that testified of him. His enemies also remembered these words some years after, and, by misquoting them, bare false witness against him. (Note, Matt. xxvi. 61.)

V. 23—25. It appears that our Lord wrought several miracles at Jerusalem, during this passover, and many persons were thus led to believe in him and own him as a prophet, or even as the Messiah; but they seem to have had no proper knowledge of the spiritual redemption which he came to effect, or any due sense of their need of his salvation. He did not, therefore, think it proper to consort much with them, as if he had confided in their professions; perhaps knowing that they wanted to make him a king, and thence to take occasion to excite disturbances in the city. For he knew the secret thoughts and dispositions of their hearts: he did not want others to testify to him of any man's character or intentions; for by his own omniscience he knew perfectly every man's heart, and all its desires and counsels. (Marg. Ref.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—11.

We should always endeavour to ensure the divine approbation in all our undertakings; and though "marriage is honourable in all," and Jesus sanctioned and graced that institution by his first miracle, as well as by his presence, yet the believer cannot expect comfort and a

blessing, unless he engages in it on such principles, and in such a manner, as may give him confidence in calling on Jesus, so to speak, to attend on it. Indeed, we ought not in any thing to affect a superstitious austerity, nor need we scruple to feast with our friends on proper occasions; yet every social interview should be so conducted, that we might confidently invite the Redeemer to join with us, if he were now on earth. He will at all times be present, invisibly, to approve or condemn our conduct; and all levity, luxury, and excess, must be offensive to him. If we would have the comfort of his presence, we must entertain his disciples also; and our conversation should be such as they delight in. In this manner we may "use hospitality without grudging;" and the Lord himself will not suffer us to want. Having stated our difficulties to him, and submitted to his wisdom, the season, manner, and proportion of our supply, we shall not long be left unprovided for. But how ready should we also be to relieve our needy brethren, and to minister to their comfort, seeing Jesus himself wrought a miracle, to supply wine on a joyful occasion, for the refreshment of the company! If we would have blessings from his power and love, we must unreservedly follow his directions; even though some of them should seem unnecessary or unreasonable. What he gives in a special manner to his disciples is always the best; and his ways are not only unlike those of men, but far superior to them. The anger of God, the curse of his broken law, and our depravity and guilt, turn the bounties of Providence into occasions of deeper destruction; but his blessing and the grace of the Gospel convert them all into spiritual advantages, and give them a peculiar relish. Thus Moses opened his commission to the Egyptians, by changing water into blood; but Christ began his gracious ministry, by turning water into wine. They, whom the world feasts, have their best wine first; and even while they live, every enjoyment grows more and more insipid; their mirth is soon damped; and death at length removes them to final misery and despair: but they whom Christ entertains at his marriage-supper have indeed many present comforts, which increase on them here; but their best wine is kept till last, and they shall drink it for ever new in the kingdom of their Father. In all these things he manifests his glory, and his disciples, who believe in his name, will thus be excited to honour and obey him.

V. 12—25.

Where the presence and doctrine of Christ are not valued, they will not long be continued; but he always is present with those who copy his example, by conscientiously attending on the ordinances of God. His power is principally exerted by a secret influence upon the minds of men, to extirpate the corruptions from our hearts, and from his visible Church, where, alas! they are found in great

CHAP. III.

Nicodemus comes to Jesus by night, 1, 2. Jesus shows him the necessity of being born again, 3—13; and speaks of his own death, and faith in him, 14, 15. The great love of God, in giving his Son to redeem the world, 16, 17. The condemnation of unbelievers, 18—21. Jesus baptizeth in Judea, and John at Aenon, 22—24. John instructs his disciples concerning the glory of Christ, the salvation of those who believed in him, and the wrath of God abiding on unbelievers, 25—36.

abundance, constitutes the chief part of his present severity. His hand holds the scourge, not the avenging sword, during the day of his patience; nor will he ever destroy those who are willing to be cleansed. Zeal for the honour of God's sanctuary and ordinances still engrosses his mind: his indignation is daily excited by the abominations of those who make his Father's house an house of merchandise; and, unless they repent, he will at length "make" them as a fiery oven in the day of his wrath." They, who of old questioned his authority to purge his temple, and to oppose their wickedness, were at length enraged by his rebukes to put him to death; but he raised up the sacred temple of his body by his own divine power, that in it "all the fulness of the Godhead might dwell" for ever. He speedily took dreadful vengeance of the Jews for their enormous impiety: and all who despise his authority and warnings, or hate his Gospel, shall perish in like manner. But his disciples will reverence his words, when they do not understand them: they will treasure them up in their memories, and wait till the event explains them; and thus their faith will be continually strengthened by further evidence of his truth and love. But let us beware of a dead faith, or a formal profession; as carnal temporary believers are not to be trusted, for they often prove most treacherous enemies: and, however men may impose on others, or on themselves, they cannot impose on their glorious, heart-searching Judge.

NOTES.

CHAP. III. V. 1, 2. The miracles which our Lord wrought at Jerusalem excited the attention of the rulers and Pharisees: and, though prejudiced against him, they were not at this time so inveterate as they afterwards became. Indeed, some of them were of opinion that he was an extraordinary Prophet; and Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee, a teacher, and a ruler of the Jews, or a member of their grand council, was desirous of some conversation with him. But as he was afraid of being reviled by his brethren, he came *by night* privately to the house where Jesus lodged, at or near Jerusalem, and addressed him by the respectful name of Rabbi. This appears the more remarkable, when we consider the obscurity of our Lord's birth and education, and the poverty of his circumstances, and contrast them with the rank and station of Nicodemus.

VOL. IV.—No. 28.

THERE was a man ^a of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 The same ^b came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, ^c Rabbi, ^d we know that thou art a teacher come from God: ^e for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, ^f Except a man be born ^g again, ^h he cannot see the kingdom of God.

h 5. i. 3. xii. 40. Deut. xxix. 4. Jer. v. 21. Matt. xiii. 11—16. xvi. 17. 2 Cor. iv. 4.

—He also declared that he and others were assured that he was a teacher sent immediately from God; as no man could perform such powerful and beneficent miracles, without the presence, favour, and operation of almighty God: and in this conviction, he came to him, that he might learn what were the peculiar doctrines, or practices, which he came to inculcate.

V. 3. The Pharisees, besides a scrupulous exactness in the ceremonies of the law, strictly observed the traditions of the elders; and thus sought and rested in an external purity, while the heart was full of uncleanness: but our Lord immediately directed the attention of Nicodemus to the source of internal purity. It has been already observed, that the word *verily* implies a strong asseveration; and in the beginning of a sentence it is peculiar to Christ. (Note, Matt. vi. 5.) St. John generally mentions the affirmation as doubled, which adds a still greater energy to it. (Marg. Ref.) We are therefore previously sure, that something of vast importance, and very liable to be overlooked, is here intended. It is allowed that the expression, *born again*, is figurative, and therefore it should not be strained too far in the interpretation: yet surely the figure should be regarded as peculiarly proper and significant. Some argue, that *to be born again* means no more than to be baptized, and they quote the ancient fathers in proof of it. But will any man say, that no one can *see*, or *enter into*, the kingdom of God; that is, no one can understand the nature of true religion, become Christ's true disciple, or inherit the happiness of heaven, without the baptism of water? This is, indeed the outward sign; but, surely, we must look for something far more spiritual and excellent as the thing signified! Others understand it of *reformation*: but outward reformation may be mere hypocrisy; or it may be the result of worldly and selfish motives, or corrupted by pride and ostentation. Nay, a man may change one kind of sin for another, or one creed or sect for another, in various ways, and yet remain very far from the kingdom of God: in short, If regeneration here mean only reformation of life, our Lord, instead of making any new discovery, has thrown a great deal of obscurity on what was before plain and obvious, and known not only to the Jews, but to the wiser heathens. And, indeed, this is the main article in dispute among many. Some think all things in Scripture are expressed

15. 11, 12. 13.
22. 20. 1 Cor. 2.
48. 7.

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?'

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say

unto thee, Except a man be ^b born of water,¹ and of the Spirit,² he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

1 John v. 6-8.—11. 13. Rom. viii. 2. 1 Cor. vi. 11. 1 John 1. 29 v. 1.—20. Matt. v. 20. xviii. 3. xxviii. 19. Luke xiii. 3. 24. Acts ii. 38. iii. 19. Rom. xiv. 17. 2 Cor. x. 17. 18. Gal. vi. 15. Eph. ii. 4-10. 2 Thes. ii. 13, 14.

15. 11, 12. 13.
22. 20. 1 Cor. 2.
48. 7.

'in condescension to our capacities, so that there is still 'to be conceived in many of them an inexpressible grandeur; whilst, on the other hand, others suppose that, 'under the pomp and grandeur of the most hyperbolical expressions, things of a low and ordinary sense are to 'be understood.' (Owen.) Every one may see how applicable this is to all those interpretations of the new birth, which explains this most energetic expression to signify, either things exceedingly plain, or of a very inferior nature in religion. Frequent occasions have before occurred of considering the subject, (Note, i. 13.) but it may here be expedient to elucidate the propriety of the metaphor. When a child is born into the world, though no new matter is brought into existence, yet a new creature is produced; and all its capacities, senses, and limbs, are new, and suited to that new life on which it hath entered. Thus, when the grace of God changes the sinner's heart, the person indeed is the same, but he becomes a new man, possessed of new capacities, perceptions, affections, and dispositions, and is prepared to make a new use of all his organs, senses, and faculties: he enters as a new creature into the spiritual world, and becomes capable of employments and satisfactions, to which he was before an utter stranger. When an infant is born, it has all the parts of a grown man; but they are in a weak state, and need nourishment, attention, and time, before they are fitted to perform their proper functions in a complete manner. Thus the regenerated sinner has the substance of all holy dispositions communicated to his soul; but they are in an infantile state, and must grow up gradually, and, with care and spiritual nourishment, to maturity: this nourishment is provided, and the new-born babe, in the spiritual, as well as in the natural world, desires, relishes, and thrives upon it. (Note, 1 Pet. ii. 2.) No man can comprehend how the infant is formed in the womb; nor can any man know how God effects the sanctifying change in the sinner's heart. He works by means and instruments in both cases; and in each of them a real creation is effected by his omnipotence. The birth of the infant precedes the exercise of its senses, and is the necessary introduction to all the actions of future life; so the new birth must precede all the actions of the spiritual life: till that has taken place, the man can neither see, hear, speak, walk, nor work in a spiritual manner. But as when a living child is born it will certainly move and act; so, when the sinner is born again, he will repent, believe, love, obey, and worship. Whatever be a man's natural abilities, attainments, notions, or profession, our Lord assures us, that "he cannot see the kingdom of God:" he can neither discern its spiritual nature, nor the excellence of its blessings and privileges. This is the unalterable appointment of God: but it has also its foundation in the reason and nature of things. God is perfect in holiness, his law is holy; his Gospel is holy: all things relating to true religion are holy and spiritual. This is their

glory and excellency: but man by nature is unholy and carnal, and cannot *relish*, or even *discern*, that excellency. God and his law, with the nature of holiness and happiness, are unchangeable: therefore man must change, or he can never be conformed to them, or be happy in them. Every revelation of God requires of sinful man the deepest humiliation; but man is a self-justifying, self-sufficient creature: he must therefore be inwardly and effectually changed, before he can understand the nature and glory of the Gospel. Without this, he can see no excellency in the holiness of God, no goodness or justice in the strict and spiritual precepts and awful sanction of the law, no hatefulness in himself, no malignity deserving damnation in his sins, no preciousness in the way of salvation by Christ, no beauty in conformity to his image and character. Consequently, he can neither submit, repent, believe, love, nor obey; but he must remain a rebel and an enemy, and a despiser, hater, or abuser of the Gospel: he cannot therefore be a true Christian, and a spiritual worshipper; nor can he have the meetness for the enjoyments and employments of heaven. He may exercise the functions, and participate the satisfactions, of the animal or rational life; but he must remain *spiritually* dead, and incapable of such satisfactions as angels and saints enjoy in heaven, and as pious men experience on earth: even as a watch, or other curious machine, constructed with three distinct parts, may move on regularly as to two of them, when the third is rendered incapable of further motion, unless it be restored by a skill similar to that of the original maker. Some render the words *born again*, *born from above*; and no doubt they admit of that meaning: but Nicodemus did not thus understand them. In short, the new-birth is the beginning of spiritual life, without which we can no more live a heavenly life, than we could an earthly one without being born into this world. 'The beginning of Christianity is placed in this; that we know ourselves, not "only to be in some measure corrupt, but entirely "dead "in sin;" "so that it is necessary, that our nature, as to "its qualities, should be created again and anew; which "can be effected by no other power than that of God, by "whom we were at first made.' (Beza.) (Note, Eph. ii. 1-3.)—Jesus, observing that he said nothing of the 'excellency and power of his doctrine to change the 'hearts and reform the lives of men, answered—him,— "Except a man be born again?" 'that is, renewed in his 'mind, will, and affections, by the operations of the Holy 'Spirit, and so become a new creature, "he cannot see," 'that is, enjoy the blessings of "the kingdom of God." (Whitby.)

V. 4, 5. Nicodemus, though seriously impressed, seems to have had no view of religion, further than as it related to the outward conduct: he could not, therefore, understand what our Lord intended; but adverting to the literal meaning of the words, and observing with what earnestness Jesus insisted on the necessity of being born

Gen. v. 3. v. 5.
12. Job xiv. 1.
xv. 14-18. xvi.
4. Ps. ii. 10.
Rom. vii. 5. 10.
23. xiii. 1. 4. 5.
— 13. Gal. v.
16-21. Eph.
1. 3. Col. iii. 11.
Ez. xi. 19, 20.
xxvi. 26. 27.
xxviii. 13-15.
xxix. 16-18.
Eph. iv. 22-24.
Or from above.

6 That which is ^a born of the flesh is flesh; and ^a that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 ^a Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born ^a again.

again, he inquired, with great surprise, how this could possibly take place? Or how, if possible, it could prepare any one for the kingdom of God? To this our Lord replied in the same emphatical and decisive manner as before, and to the same effect: except as he further declared the Author and nature of this mysterious work. By "the kingdom of God" he doubtless primarily meant the *kingdom of the Messiah*, about which the Jews entertained such carnal and erroneous opinions: but as admission into this is necessary, in order to "enter into the kingdom of God in heaven," both may be included. (Note, *Matt.* iii. 2.) No man can "enter into the kingdom of God;" none can become true disciples of Christ and heirs of heaven, without that change, of which the Holy Spirit is the Author, and purifying, fertilizing water is the outward sign. Water was used among the Jews in "divers washings;" John used it in his baptism, and Jesus in his initiatory ordinance. This was the emblem of that spiritual washing, without which no man can be admitted into the true Church, as a living member of the same. As baptism, in the ordinary course of things, is requisite to the outward profession of Christianity; so regeneration is invariably necessary to the possession of its privileges, and the performance of its duties. Except a man "be born of water, and of the Spirit," except his heart be purified by that inward washing of the Holy Spirit, of which water hath been the constant emblem, "he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "If, under the word *water*, baptism be especially intended, as that which is the peculiar sacrament of our regeneration, the sentence must be taken, as Christ had respect to the general order of the Church. Neither yet did he simply bind the grace of God to baptism, as if it was, absolutely and without any exception, necessary, seeing he just after ascribes regeneration to the Spirit, without any mention of water. Thus, elsewhere, the *Spirit and fire* are joined, but the order is reversed. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." "*Water* is really present in the sacrament of baptism, as an outward sign and seal of the spiritual and divine energy, which inwardly cleanses us. But *fire*, when joined to the Spirit, cannot be understood otherwise than metaphorically. In this place "the Spirit" being added to "water," is a declaration of the external sacramental baptism; in the other, the fire is mentioned as an explanation of the divine energy, taken from a corporeal thing. (*Beza.*) (Note, *Matt.* iii. 11, 12.) "Whatever ignorance of the precept, or mistake about the nature of it, renders not men incapable of baptism by the Holy Ghost, can never render them incapable of the salvation promised to the baptized. It cannot be purely the want, but the contempt, of it, which must condemn us." (*Whitby.*)

V. 6. To be born again, of parents either Jewish, or

8 The ^a wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: ^a so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

—20. Luke vi. 43, 44. 1 John i. 29. 10. 5, 2.

Gentile, or Christian, were that possible, could be of no use to any man; as "that which is born of the flesh," by natural generation from the stock of fallen Adam, "is flesh," carnal, corrupt, and enmity to God, (*Notes, &c.* *Rom.* viii. 1—13. *Marg. Ref.*) but "that which is born of the Spirit," that which is communicated to the soul from the second Adam, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, "is spirit;" is like its Author, of a spiritual and holy nature, and is capable of spiritual and holy exercises and enjoyment. "Christ takes it for granted, as beyond all contradiction, that he must be pure, who would be happy with God. By the word *flesh*, therefore, is meant, that the whole man, as the offspring of man, is impure, as well in his mind as in his body." (*Beza.*) The clause, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," cannot mean that the *rational soul*, as distinct from the body, is thus brought into existence; but that the man is raised from the death of sin to a life of righteousness, and so his renewal to holiness is begun. But to understand by the *flesh* only the body, in the first clause, would wholly destroy the antithesis, and indeed all connexion between the two parts of the verse. And where would be the need of regeneration; of a renewal "in the spirit of our mind," if the soul were in itself spiritual, and only the body carnal? In fact, the soul or heart is the seat and source of sin, and the body only its instrument. The marginal references, if carefully compared, must satisfy any impartial person, that the above explanation of "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh," is the true one: and the subject is of such importance, in order to understand Christianity, that it deserves the most diligent investigation. "It appears to me impossible to clear up either the beauty of the antithesis, or the truth of the assertion, on any other interpretation." (*Doddridge.*)

V. 7, 8. Nicodemus had no reason for his surprise at our Lord's declaration, that sinful man must be born again; as if it were more unintelligible than other things, the truth and reality of which no man disputed. The wind, for instance, blows from different points of the compass, and more gently or more furiously, "as it listeth;" that is, so far as man is concerned, but though the sound of it is heard, and the other effects of it are most manifest, yet no man can "tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth." Even to this day, after all improvements in natural science, men can neither account satisfactorily for all the changes of the wind, nor render it submissive to their will. Even so it is with "every one that is born of the Spirit;" the nature and effects of this change are most manifest; the manner in which it is wrought is inexplicable; and its direction to this or the other person is independent on the will of man, and according to the sovereign pleasure of the great Creator. (*Note.* i. 13.) But if man cannot govern or change the wind, or explain those things that relate to it, how can he expect to govern or explain the

1.4. vi. 52. 60. 9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, ^a How can these things be? ^b 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, ^c Art thou a master of Israel, ^d and knowest not these things? ^e 11 Verily, ^f verily, I say unto thee, ^g We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; ^h and ye receive not our witness. ⁱ 12 If I have told you ^j earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of ^k heavenly things? ^l 13 And ^m no man hath ascended up to heaven, ⁿ but he that came down from heaven, ^o even the Son of man, which is in heaven. ^p

11. v. 31-40. 12. Heb. 11. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945. 946. 947. 948. 949. 950. 951. 952. 953. 954. 955. 956. 957. 958. 959. 960. 961. 962. 963. 964. 965. 966. 967. 968. 969. 970. 971. 972. 973. 974. 975. 976. 977. 978. 979. 980. 981. 982. 983. 984. 985. 986. 987. 988. 989. 990. 991. 992. 993. 994. 995. 996. 997. 998. 999. 1000.

operations of the Holy Spirit? As the same word signifies both *spirit* and the *wind*, in the original languages, the similitude has a peculiar propriety.

V. 9—11. Nicodemus had not been used to hear this new birth insisted on by the scribes and priests; nor had he ever made it the immediate subject of his own study or discussion, and attained to an experience of its nature and effects: he could not, therefore, understand our Lord's meaning. He was not willing to reject his doctrine, which was confirmed by evident miracles; yet this doctrine, on which he so strenuously insisted, seemed to him inexplicable and impracticable; and he therefore inquired, as a man astonished, "How these things could be?" To this our Lord answered, as equally surprised at his ignorance, by demanding, whether he, as a teacher of God's people, could possibly be unacquainted with this essential and important truth? Not only was it absolutely requisite to the existence of true religion, as nothing but a worthless form could subsist without it, but it was evidently contained in the old Revelation, and implied in every passage, which required spiritual worship, inward holiness, and heavenly affections, from a fallen sinner. (*Marg. Ref.*) Jesus then proceeded to declare, that he, and those servants of God who in every age concurred with him, spake, in this respect, what they assuredly knew to be true, and testified what they were most intimately acquainted with: yet the Jews in general, and the Pharisees in particular, would not receive their testimony. Prophets, apostles, and faithful ministers, knew this subject from revelation, from their own experience, and from observation of its effects in others: Jesus knew it in a still higher and more sublime manner. (31, 32.) "There is an implied anti-thesis, which, in my judgment, should be carefully noted. You, saith Christ, teach things which you do not understand, and are believed; we teach a certain and known doctrine, and yet ye will not receive our doctrine. He joins himself with the prophets, whose writings were so negligently read in the synagogues." (*Besa.*) Some expositors think that our Lord, in the tenth verse, referred to the language of the Jews about proselytes, whom they spake of as *infants new born*, &c.: but it is not likely that he should lay such stress on any of their traditions or expressions, which, on other occasions, he decidedly opposed: and the above remark shows what our Lord meant, as Moses and the prophets, which were continually read in their synagogues, joined in his testimony to the necessity of regeneration. So that even the principal teachers in Israel "erred, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God."

V. 12, 13. The change before described seems, here

to be meant by *earthly things*: for as it must be, and continually has been, wrought on earth, so it is comparatively easy to be understood and illustrated; and we may reason and discourse about it far better than about the mysteries which are next spoken of. No creature can find satisfaction, without capacities of enjoyment suited to his situation. Pleasure cannot be experienced without appetite and relish, as well as the means of gratification. Every animal must be in its proper element, in order to be easy and comfortable. The fish could not possibly live and enjoy life on dry ground, unless its nature should previously be changed. Holiness and spirituality are not the sinner's element: submission to God, and communion with God, are not his desired enjoyments: nay, he has a rooted antipathy against them. Yet happiness is impossible to a rational creature without holiness; and holiness cannot be so much as begun without "being born again." So that this truth, which men are so apt to deny, and treat as enthusiasm, has as evident a ground in reason as in Scripture. Let it but be granted, that God is perfectly holy; that happiness consists in his favour, presence, image, and service; and that man by nature has no relish for this kind of happiness; and from these premises, (which any one must be very hardy to deny,) it must demonstratively follow, that, "except a man be born again," he could not enjoy happiness, were he admitted into heaven; but for that reason, among others, he never can enter thither. If men will not therefore believe this doctrine, of which we "that are of the earth, and earthly," can reason so plainly, and illustrate by the nature of animals, the grafting of trees, and various other apt similitudes, and which is actually witnessed in its effects when sinners are converted, how shall they believe what Jesus testifies to them concerning "heavenly things?" namely, such as relate to the mysteries of the Trinity, to our Lord's eternal Deity, his incarnation, and redemption by his blood, which could never have been thought of, had not God revealed them, and which must rest wholly on the testimony of Revelation. We may indeed discern glory and suitableness in them when revealed; but we feel that they are sublime and mysterious, beyond comparison; and, though not contrary to our reason, yet far above, and out of its reach and province. The knowledge of these things must be derived immediately and entirely from above, and received by faith alone: yet no man hath ascended thither to fetch down that knowledge; nor can it be received, except from Christ, who came down from heaven, when he became "the Son of man." Yet even then *he was in heaven*, in respect of his divine nature. For the two natures are so inseparably united in his mysterious Person, that, as God is said to have

Num. xxi. 7-9.

2 Kings xviii. 4.

11. 23. 32-34.

31 Ps. xvi. 16.

Matt. xxvi. 54.

Luke xviii. 31.

33. xxiv. 20, 25.

27. 44-46. Acts

11. 23. iv. 27, 28.

1. 16. 35. 1. 12. vi.

40. 47. xi. 25.

26. xi. 44-46.

xx. 31. 1. 13.

22. Mark. xvi.

16. Acts viii. 37.

xvi. 30, 31.

Rom. v. 1, 2. x. 9-14.

Gal. i. 16. 20. i. 23.

1 John v. 1. 11-13.

k. v. 24. x.

28-30. Matt. xviii. 11.

Luke xix. 10. Acts xiii. 41.

1 Cor. i. 13. 2 Cor. iv. 3.

1. xvii. 2, 3.

Matt. v. 21. vi. 22, 23.

1 John ii. 25. v. 13-20.

m. Luke ii. 14. Rom. v. 8. 2. Cor.

v. 19-21. Tit. iii. 4.

1 John iv. 9. 19. 13-20.

7. 1. 14. 18. Gen. xxi. 12.

Mark xii. 6.

Rom. v. 10. viii. 32.

—o 15. Matt. ix. 13.

1. Tim. i. 15, 16.

14 ¶ And ^a as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, ^b even so must the Son of man be lifted up;

15 That ^c whosoever believeth in him should ^d not perish, but have ^e eternal life.

16 For ^f God so loved the world, that he ^g gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should

not perish, but have everlasting life. ^h For ⁱ God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; ^j but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him ^k is not condemned: but ^l he that believeth not is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

not perish, but have everlasting life. ^p v. 45. vii. 15.

17 For ^q God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; ^r but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him ^s is not condemned: but ^t he that believeth not is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

purchased the Church with his own blood, so the Son of man is said to be in heaven, when he was here on earth, because One with the eternal Word and Son of God. This language seems incapable of any other interpretation; and to wrest it to agree with any other doctrine, makes our Lord to speak in the most obscure and unintelligible manner imaginable. Doubtless this was intended as a specimen of those heavenly things which he had before mentioned. 'If, while I have discoursed—of those principles of Christianity, which both our enlightened reason and experience can easily make good, thou believest not, but findest such difficulties, what possibility is there that thou shouldst believe, when I shall tell thee of the great mysteries of salvation, and of those high and incomprehensible matters of another world? These are things which no man can tell thee, but he that has been in heaven; and no man hath been there to see them, but he that is now come down from heaven, even that Son of man, (that talketh with thee,) who in respect of his Deity is still in heaven.' (Bp. Hall.)

V. 14, 15. (Notes, &c. Num. xxi. 6—9.) This passage in the history of Israel was well known, but the typical meaning was not at all discovered by the Jews in general. The promised Messiah was not to be exalted on earth to a glorious throne, as they vainly expected, but to be lifted up, and hung on an ignominious cross, for the redemption of his people. Moses the giver of the law was ordered to make a serpent of brass, like the fiery serpents, yet perfectly innoxious: this he lifted up on a pole, in the sight of the people, who looked at it when mortally bitten by the serpents; and so they were miraculously healed. Thus Jesus, (in the likeness of sinful flesh, in the nature of Adam, by whom sin and death entered into the world, though perfectly free from sin,) was lifted up on the cross, to redeem us from the curse of the law, being made a "curse for us;" and this must needs take place, in order to the completion of the promises and predictions which God had given, and the satisfaction of his justice in saving sinners. In consequence of his crucifixion, he is held forth in the preached Gospel, that "whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life." This method, which God had devised in his infinite wisdom, is suited to bring the perishing sinner to expect all his salvation from God, and to give him all the glory of it; to promote humility, dependence, and gratitude; to render him submissive and obedient; and to teach him every salutary lesson, by looking to that one Object from which he derives his peace, hope, and comfort. Thus the important change which takes place in the heart, and is

manifested in the life, of every true believer, proves the efficacy of faith in a crucified Saviour, as evidently, as the restored health and vigour of the almost expiring Israelite proved, that his expectation of recovery by looking to the brazen serpent was not a vain presumption. 'Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Barnabas, say, this was a figure of the cross; and a symbol of salvation; he that turned to it being preserved from death, not by what he saw, but by the Saviour of all men.' (Whitby.)

V. 16. The whole design of man's redemption originated in the love of God to the world, even to the apostate race of men. This could not be *approbation*, or *complacency*: for he judged them deserving of his final indignation, and meet objects of his holy abhorrence; and so vile, that he could not honourably show them mercy, except by an expedient more suited to expose the desert of their rebellion, than even the eternal punishment of the whole race would have been. The love of God to the world was therefore *good-will, compassion, benevolence*. (Marg. Ref.) He so loved the world, that he not only purposed to pardon sin, and to give heaven to those who repented; but (when the honour of his justice and holiness seemed to oppose the exercise of his mercy,) "he gave his only begotten Son," the co-equal partaker of his divine nature, a person of infinite dignity and excellency, and infinitely beloved by him, compared with whom all worlds were as nothing; *to be made flesh*, that in our nature he might atone for our sins by his sufferings and death upon the cross; that this obstacle being removed, he might forgive, save, and bless with everlasting life, all those of every nation who believe in Christ, and who must otherwise have perished for ever. The world, or the race of men, (as opposed to the one nation of Israel, for whose sake alone the Jews supposed that the Messiah would come;) is therefore now borne with as under a dispensation of mercy; sinners in general are invited to partake of the blessing; believers without exception are saved. But as true faith springs from the new-birth, and the Spirit quickens whom he will; so we must here allow a limitation, as likewise in the intention of the Redeemer; for "known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." This, however, was not that view of the subject, which it was proper on that occasion to exhibit.

V. 17, 18. Our Lord further showed Nicodemus, "that God did not send his Son into the world, at this his first coming, to condemn or judge the world," as might previously have been expected, when the approach of so glorious and holy a person was announced. This was not the purpose of his incarnation, ministry, and work

19 And ¹this is the condemnation, that ²Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, ³because their deeds were evil.

20 For ¹every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be ²reproved.

21 But ¹he that doeth truth cometh to the light, ²that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.

22 ¶ After ¹these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, ²and baptized.

23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon, ¹near to Salim, because there was ²much water there; ³and they came, and were baptized.

24 For ¹John was not yet cast into prison.

25 Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews ¹about purifying.

26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, ¹he that was with thee beyond Jordan, ²to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, ³and all men come to him.

on earth: but, on the contrary, he came to procure and reveal salvation, that sinners of every nation might be invited to partake of it. Inasmuch that the man, who believes in Christ, is not judged, or no longer remains under condemnation, how many soever his sins have been; but is brought into a justified state; while the unbeliever "is condemned already;" he hath rejected the only method of pardon which God ever revealed; he remains under the sentence denounced by the law, as a condemned criminal reserved for execution; and his guilt is exceedingly aggravated, by his refusal to believe in the name of the Son of God, and by despising the glorious display of the divine wisdom, justice, truth, and mercy, made in that method of salvation. *In the name, &c.* "Though the name of a person be often put for the person himself, yet I think 'it fuller intimated in this expression, that the person 'spoken of is great and magnificent: and therefore it is 'generally used to express either God the Father, or our 'Lord Jesus Christ.' (Doddridge.)

V. 19—21. Unbelief is not a mere *speculative mistake*, into which an honest mind may be led; but it originates from the wickedness and ungodliness of a man's heart: so that this is the reason of the unbeliever's condemnation, and the test by which he will be judged, "that "Light is come into the world," to show men the perfections, truth, and will of God, and the way of salvation from wrath and sin: but they love ignorance, delusion, or infidelity, in preference to it, because more congenial to the pride, enmity and rebellion of their hearts, and the secret or open wickedness of their lives. For every one, who habitually loves and practises any kind of evil, will hate and shun that light which detects and exposes it: thus men keep aloof from the true Gospel of Christ, and run into various perversions of it, lest it should disquiet their consciences, interfere with their indulgence in sin, or detect the fallacy of their presumptuous confidence. But he who acts uprightly and conscientiously, and really desires to know and do the whole will of God without reserve, is glad to bring his creed, his character, and conduct, to the Light, that they may be scrutinized by it: that he may be further instructed and directed; and that it may be made manifest that "his works are wrought in God,"

by virtue of union with him, and grace derived from him, according to his will, for his glory, and as accepted by him. These are important truths of general application: yet they were spoken with a peculiar reference to the case of the Pharisees; and it was thus declared, that the opposition, which would be made to Christ and his doctrine, arose from the wickedness of their hearts and lives, which could not endure the light of his spiritual ministry. Nicodemus, therefore, and they to whom he might report the result of this conference, were warned not to reject the counsel of God against themselves. Thus our Lord set before Nicodemus the grand outlines of Christian truth, and perhaps he enlarged more fully on the several particulars: and though Nicodemus did not clearly comprehend his meaning, yet he was gradually led further into the knowledge of the truth, and grew bolder in making profession of it.

V. 22—24. Our Lord soon after this left Jerusalem, and retired into the cities or villages of Judea, where he preached and collected followers, and his more stated disciples baptized them; (iv. 1, 2.) It is not probable that they baptized in that form which he afterwards prescribed; but after the manner of John, and as introductory to the more complete establishment of his religion. The place, where John was preaching and baptizing at the same time, is not mentioned elsewhere: there were *many waters* in it, which rendered it convenient to him, as he still baptized great numbers. (Marg. Ref.) This must have preceded any thing recorded of Christ's ministry by the other evangelists. (Matt. iv. 12.) It is remarkable, that we read nothing of the apostles or disciples baptizing before our Lord's ascension, except in these few passages of John's Gospel. The evangelist here speaks of John Baptist's imprisonment, as well known; but no where mentions any further particulars, either of that, or of his being put to death by Herod. Had he not been satisfied that these important facts had been recorded by other divinely inspired writers, he would hardly have passed them over in this manner, after having so particularly insisted on the ministry and testimony of John. This confirms the opinion, that he intended his Gospel as a kind of supplement to the three other Gospels, which had before been published.

obeyed them; he rejoiced greatly to hear his voice, and to witness his glory; and this his joy was now complete, in that he had heard and seen the promised Messiah, and found that the people flocked to him. He also knew, that Jesus would continue to increase in honour and influence, for "of his government and peace there would be no end;" but, for himself, he must expect to be less and less considered; nor did this at all deduct from his rejoicing in Christ. He was sensible that this was reasonable and right: for Jesus came from heaven as the Son of God, and was above *all men, angels, or creatures*; whilst John was of the earth, a mere sinful, mortal man, who could only speak in the language of the earth, concerning the more plain subjects of religion; (12.) but Jesus came from heaven, to speak of heavenly things in language suitable to their sublime and mysterious nature, as of matters familiar to him; - being what he had seen and heard. Yet very few, and, as it were, *none*, compared with the whole nation, received his testimony: but those few, who acknowledged him as the Messiah, and profited by his instructions, set their seal to the truth of God, in respect of the fulfilment of his ancient prophecies and promises, and publicly declared their assurance that his word was to be depended on, in every possible case, as infallibly sure. For as Jesus came from the bosom of the Father, his words were indeed the words of God, and implicitly to be credited: and as the great Prophet of the Church, the Father gave him the Spirit, not by measure, as to inferior prophets, but in immeasurable fulness, from him to be communicated to all others who were sent by him. Indeed, the Father loved and delighted in the Son, and in his mediatorial undertaking and work, because they so greatly glorified his name: and therefore he had intrusted to him, as Mediator, all authority and judgment; had committed to him every thing relative to the government of the Church and of the world; and had determined that all fulness should dwell in him. Thus, everlasting life could only be had by faith in him, and might assuredly be thus obtained: whereas every one, whether he were a disciple

CHAP. IV.

Jesus leaves Judea, 1—3. In the absence of his disciples he discourses with a Samaritan woman concerning the water of life, 4—15; brings her sins to remembrance, 16—19; shows her the nature of acceptable worship, 20—24, and declares himself to be the Messiah, 25, 26. The disciples return, and are surprised to see him thus employed, 27.

The woman informs her neighbours, and induces them to go and hear him, 28—30. Jesus shows his disciples his delight in his Father's work, and the blessed harvest about to be reaped by them, with reference to the Samaritans coming to him, 31—38. The Samaritans believe in him, and he continues among them for two days, 39—43. He returns to Cana, and heals a nobleman's son who lay sick at Capernaum, 44—54.

of the Pharisees, or of John, or whatever his character and profession might be, who did not believe in the Son of God, could not see life, or partake of salvation; but the wrath of God must for ever rest upon him, as it does on every sinner till he believe in Christ. (Note, i. 29.)—
 'Why do you endeavour to add any thing to my condition? This is the lot of all men, that they cannot attain even the least thing of themselves; but whatever they have of excellency, they must ascribe it to the bounty of God. You must, however, confess that you have heard from me, what is His pre-eminence, and what is the nature of my ministry; namely, that I am sent as the forerunner of Christ. Why, therefore, should you desire me to compare myself with him? Truly it is right and just that his excellency should, gradually, more and more shine forth, and that I should be, gradually, eclipsed. But nothing could possibly occur, more rejoicing to my heart: and, so far from endeavouring to prevent your going over from me to him, I, on the contrary, diligently warn you, that all your salvation depends on him alone.' (Beza.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—5.

Many are convinced of more divine truth than they dare avow in the face of an ungodly world, or among proud despisers of the Gospel: and though we must not excuse such as are afraid or ashamed to associate with those whom they are convinced to be sent of God, yet we must not hastily reject them, lest we should quench the smoking flax: for, by proper instruction and encouragement, they may, at length, become more bold and decided. True religion consists in the right state of the heart: and as he who has life and death at his disposal, hath so repeatedly and solemnly assured us, that "except a man be born again, he cannot see, or enter into, the kingdom of God," it surely becomes every one seriously to inquire into the meaning of this important declaration, and to beseech the Lord to direct him to a proper solution of that inquiry. In this way, a man may hear, read, meditate, pray, and wait for a considerable time, before he clearly enters into the meaning; yet he will gradually and certainly obtain an experimental knowledge of it. But surely it is the most absurd presumption in the world, to expect future happiness, without either knowing what it is to be "born again," or inquiring further about it; as if we could enter heaven in

defiance of Christ, and, by so doing, prove his most solemn and repeated declaration to be a falsehood! Nor is it safer, or wiser, to interpret it of any notion, or impression, which leaves a man as proud, as carnal, and as much an enemy of God, as before; which neither evidences his title to the kingdom, nor gives him any meetness for its holy employments. But "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him:" To evade conviction, therefore, it is common for men to put an absurd construction on them, and to draw ridiculous inferences from them; and then to inquire, Whether this be not very foolish? Whereas the folly lies in the misconstruction and misapplication, and not in the doctrine itself, which is plain to every teachable inquirer. The Lord will explain his declarations, but he will not retract them; nor will he alter the rules of admission into his kingdom, to humour the prejudices of any set of men whatever: and the true baptism is not that which is outward in the flesh, but that which is inward, even that of the heart, by the work of the Holy Spirit, "whose praise is not of men, but of God."

V. 6—11.

Without regeneration, we cannot come to God, nor walk with him, nor worship him, nor enjoy him. The carnal mind, which belongs to us all, as born of the flesh, is enmity against God, so that they who are *in the flesh* cannot please him. But happy are they that are born of the Spirit, and made spiritual! they can discern the things of God, and relish them; religion becomes their element, they are made subjects of that "kingdom of God, which is righteousness, peace, and joy," and heirs of the incorruptible inheritance of heaven. Let it not then be marvelled at, that Jesus hath said, "we *must* be born again:" it is enough, that the Author, the nature, the necessity, and the effects of this gracious work, are manifest, though the manner and rule of it be not known. Can we indeed understand fully how the most ordinary and regular effects in nature are produced? Or can we change the course which God hath established? One ship is wafted into port, and another dashed upon the rocks by the wind, as it pleases God. The sailors can neither comprehend the reasons, nor repel the effects, of it; but yet they may use means, and employ their skill, to avail themselves of a favourable wind, or to retire from the effects of a furious tempest: and we may also use means, and expect the

a Luke i. 26. ii. 11. xix. 31. 34.
Acta x. 36. i.
Cor. ii. 8. xv.
47. 2 Cor. iv. 5. Jam. ii. 1. Rev. xix. 15 —b iii. 22. 26.

WHEN, therefore, ^a the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard ^b that

Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,

blessing of God on them. It is indeed true, that there are many teachers in Israel, and those of great repute, who are ready to say, "How can these things be?" Nay, they positively declare that they cannot be; and that all are enthusiasts, or hypocrites, who pretend to them. In an inferior sense, however, we may say with humble confidence, We testify that which we have seen, heard, experienced, and observed, whether men will receive or reject our testimony.

V. 12—21.

If more obvious truths be rejected, we need not wonder that the great mysteries of redemption by the blood of the incarnate Son of God are controverted or neglected: for how can men believe that this glorious Person, the Creator of all the world, atoned for the sins of his enemies by his ignominious death upon the cross, when they are not sensible, that their carnal hearts must be changed by new-creating grace, before they can relish the holy joys of heaven? If they do not believe that, which is as capable of proof, illustration, and comprehension, as *earthly* things in general are, how can they believe that the Son of man was so One with God, that he was in one sense in heaven, when teaching here on earth, and that he actually is present with his people here on earth, now that he ever liveth to appear in the presence of God for them in heaven? These are heavenly things, and far out of the reach of all who judge of God by carnal sense or purblind reason: yet in them is contained the great plan of God for destroying the works of the devil, and the curing of those who have been poisoned with the venom of that old serpent. However infidels, scribes, or Pharisees, may deride or revile, still Christ crucified, beheld with the eye of faith, brings life and salvation to the soul of a perishing sinner; and there is no other way of escaping everlasting misery. But if we so look to him as to be saved from wrath, we shall also be delivered from the power of sin; restored gradually to spiritual health; and transformed into the image of that glorious Object, which is exhibited in the Gospel. Words can never express how free and excellent the love of God to a sinful world hath been, in giving his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Did it ever enter into the heart of an earthly prince to give his only, his beloved son to suffer an ignominious death, in order that he might honourably save the lives of some base traitors, who had aimed to subvert his throne? Yet even this would be little and mean, compared with the love of God to rebellious man! But though our God is so ready to pardon all those who believe in the name of his only begotten Son, whom he "sent into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved," yet his infinite love will tend to the deeper condemnation of all who continue to neglect so great salvation. The believer indeed is not condemned, and shall not come into condemnation: but the unbeliever is condemned already;

the wrath of God abideth on him; and he goes about continually under that awful load, which is sufficient to sink him into everlasting misery. Nor is this unbelief a light or venial matter: it springs from enmity against God, his truth, his law, and his glory, and from love of sin in some form or other. "Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil;" but this would not have been so fully proved, if Light had not come into the world, and been hated by them. And is it proper that men should hate God, the truth, knowledge, and holiness, and love wickedness and Satan's service, with impunity? They may indeed shelter themselves under some plausible pretext, or varnish it over with some specious appearance; but they have a secret quarrel with the truth because it opposes their favourite iniquities: they wish to disbelieve, and then seek for arguments to satisfy themselves in infidelity. Let us remember that the Judge hath declared, that unbelief springs from this source, and that "every one, who doeth truth, cometh to the light; that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God." Let us judge ourselves, and bring our characters and conduct to his word, to be assayed by it: let us beseech him to discover to us the secret motives by which we are actuated, and to prevent our being deceived by Satan and our own hearts.

V. 22—36.

The same disposition, which leads to bigotry and formality in religion, produces also envy, ambition, and jealousy of those who seem to outshine us: but true excellency and sanctifying grace lead to deep humility, submission to God, and a willing dependence on him. As "a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven," let us seek all our blessings from thence; give God all the glory of whatever we have or do; occupy with our talents as we are able; rejoice in the honour and service of Christ, the condescending Bridegroom of his Church; stand and hear his voice, and seek our happiness in his presence and favour. And should we be laid aside from usefulness, and see others increase whilst we decrease, let us pray to be enabled to bear it *meekly*, yea, *thankfully*, if Christ be more honoured by it. Let us attend to him, who cometh from above and is above all, that we may simply receive heavenly things from his testimony; and neither call any one master, nor lean to our own understanding, as all men, "being of the earth, are earthly, and speak of the earth." And though few indeed thus set to their seal, "that God is true," let us seek so to honour his word, that he may seal his salvation to us, by the Spirit of his Son shedding abroad his love in our hearts. This is the only way of everlasting life, through faith in the Son of God, whom the Father loveth, and into whose hand all things are given; for there is no salvation for sinners in any other, and 'he that believeth not shall without doubt perish everlastingly.'

e Acts x. 49. 1
c. 1. 12 = 17.

2 (Though ^e Jesus himself baptized not, his disciples,)

• ill 22 x 40 p. 1.
51. Matt x. 23.
Mark iii. 7.
c. 1. 12.

3 He ^d left Judea, and departed ^e again into Galilee.

f Matt x. 5. 6.
Luke ix. 49, 52
xi. 11

4 And ^f he must needs go through Samaria.

* Gen xxxvii. 19.
xviii. 22. Josh
xviii. 22.

5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to ^g the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

h Mat ix. 2. vii.
24. Heb. ii. 17.
17. 18.

6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, ^b being wearied with his journey, ⁱ sat thus on the well: and it was about ^k the sixth hour.

i Luke ii. 7. ix.
58. 2 Cor. viii.
9.

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith unto her, ^j Give me to drink.

k xvi. 45. Matt.
xxvii. 45.

l 110 xix 28. Gen.
xxiv. 43. 2 Sam.
xviii. 15 = 17.
1 Kings xvi. 10.
Matt. x. 42.

8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city ^m to buy meat.)

m 29 vi. 9. Luke
ix. 13.

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, ⁿ askest drink of me, which am a

n 27. viii. 48.
Luke x. 33.
xvii. 16 = 19.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV. V. 1—4. Our Lord did not see good to preserve his life by a succession of miracles; and the time was distant, when he would give himself into the hands of his enemies: he therefore avoided every thing which could needlessly excite their jealousy and indignation. He seems, however, to have continued a considerable time in Judea, preaching and collecting disciples: but this at length gave umbrage to the Pharisees, who heard that he received by baptism greater numbers than John had done, and on hearing this he left Judea to return into Galilee. It is observable, that our Lord did not baptize any with his own hands. Perhaps he chose to act as the Head of the Church, who baptizes with the Holy Ghost, and therefore left his servants to baptize with water; perhaps he saw that disputes would best be prevented by his baptizing none, lest those who had this peculiar distinction should glory in it: and perhaps he meant to show, that preaching the Gospel is in itself a far higher and more honourable employment, than the administration of the *external* signs of the covenant, which have generally been *exalted* too much by those who have *observed* them. (Notes, iii. 22—24. 1 Cor. i. 17.) In returning to Galilee, the road lay through Samaria, and Jesus must needs go that way, unless he would go very far about: but he had also secret purposes for taking that road.

V. 5—9. Sychar is supposed to have been the same place as Sychem, or Shechem, and to have been so named from the drunkenness of the inhabitants; for such is the signification of the word. In a piece of ground that Jacob bequeathed to Joseph, there was a well, which tradition reported to have belonged to Jacob. (Marg. Ref.) At this place our Lord arrived *about noon*, (for there seems no reason to suppose that John computed time differently

woman of Samaria? (^o for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.)

o 2 Kings xxi. 24.
Re. x. 11. 12.
Neb. iv. 1. 2.
Luke ix. 52 = 56.
Acts i. 8.
p. 18. l. 1. 6.
xiii. 6. l. ix. 6 =
8. Luke xi. 13.
Rom. viii. 32.
1 Cor. ix. 20.
2 Cor. ix. 15.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, ^p If thou knewest the gift of God, ^q and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; ^r thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee ^s living water.

q 25. 26. ix. 28 =
28. xvi. 3. xvi.
1. 1. John v. 28.
r 2 Chr xxxiii. 12.
13. 18. 19. Ps x.
27. 18. 19. 6 = 9.
1. a. c. 8 = 10.
xxviii. 13. xlii.
42. 43. Acts ix.
11. Rev. iii. 17.
18.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, ^t thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

t 41. xl. 5. 51. vii.
37 = 39. Exek. vi.
12. xxviii. 8. 9.
xli. 4. li. xiii. 3.
xxv. 6. i. 17.
17. xli. 20. xlii.
10. 11. 1 = 3. Jer.
ii. 13. Ps. xlviii.
1 = 9. 12. Zech.
xiii. 6. 1 Cor. x.
4. Rev. xii. 17.
xvi. 6. xlii. 1. 2.
17.

12 Art ^v thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

u 11. xl. 5. 51. vii.
37 = 39. Exek. vi.
12. xxviii. 8. 9.
xli. 4. li. xiii. 3.
xxv. 6. i. 17.
17. xli. 20. xlii.
10. 11. 1 = 3. Jer.
ii. 13. Ps. xlviii.
1 = 9. 12. Zech.
xiii. 6. 1 Cor. x.
4. Rev. xii. 17.
xvi. 6. xlii. 1. 2.
17.

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, ^x Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

v 11. xl. 5. 51. vii.
37 = 39. Exek. vi.
12. xxviii. 8. 9.
xli. 4. li. xiii. 3.
xxv. 6. i. 17.
17. xli. 20. xlii.
10. 11. 1 = 3. Jer.
ii. 13. Ps. xlviii.
1 = 9. 12. Zech.
xiii. 6. 1 Cor. x.
4. Rev. xii. 17.
xvi. 6. xlii. 1. 2.
17.

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, ^y shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give

x 11. xl. 5. 51. vii.
37 = 39. Exek. vi.
12. xxviii. 8. 9.
xli. 4. li. xiii. 3.
xxv. 6. i. 17.
17. xli. 20. xlii.
10. 11. 1 = 3. Jer.
ii. 13. Ps. xlviii.
1 = 9. 12. Zech.
xiii. 6. 1 Cor. x.
4. Rev. xii. 17.
xvi. 6. xlii. 1. 2.
17.

from the other evangelists,) (i. 39 :) and being wearied with his journey, he sat down *thus* on the side of the well, or near to it; taking the poor accommodations as he found them, though the seat would be uneasy, and probably there was no shelter from the meridian sun. The Samaritans were not generally disposed to receive the Jews into their houses; he therefore did not attempt to go into the town, but sent the disciples to buy some necessary provisions; as if he intended, after making a homely meal by the well's side, to walk forward in the afternoon. In the mean while a woman came to draw water, and Jesus, being thirsty, condescended to become her supplicant for a draught of it; intending also by this method to engage her in conversation. Accordingly she expressed her surprise, that he, whom she knew by his apparel to be a Jew, should ask water of her, a Samaritan. How could he think of becoming her petitioner? Or how could he expect any favour from her? For the inveteracy between the two nations and sects was so great, that they generally confined all their intercourse to matters of mere necessity, and mutually refused to ask or perform any actions of friendship or kindness. (Notes, &c. Luke x. 30—37.) These words seem to be the evangelist's observation, and not the reason assigned by the woman for her question. 'By the traditions of the Pharisees, the Jews might buy of the Samaritans; but they were not to borrow anything of them, or receive any kindness from them, or drink of their water, or eat of their morsels; for they bound them, under an anathema, not to eat of the fruit, or morsel, of a Cuthean; and held this as bad as eating swine's flesh. But Christ, despising such traditions as had no foundation, either in the law of God, or in equity, and tended to the impairing the laws of common friendship and humanity, asks drink of this Samaritan woman, and eateth with them.' (Whitby.) (Marg. Ref.)

xxiv. 39, 39 K.
10 xiv. 16-19.
Rom. v. 21. viii.
16, 17. 2 Cor. i.
22. Eph. i. 13.
14. 19. 30. 1 Pet.
1. 22, 23. 1 John a
7. 29.

xxvi. 26, 31 Pe.
10. 6. Rom. viii.
5. 1 Cor. iii. 14.
Jam. iv. 2.
b. 18. 42. 47. 48.
11. 24, 25. xvi.
17. Heb. ix. 15.
Rev. ii. 23.

him, "shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

16 Jesus saith unto her, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband :

V. 10—15. Our Lord did not expressly notice the woman's bigotry, but directed her attention to matters of greater importance. He told her, that though she was disposed to refuse him the small favour which he had asked, because he was a Jew, yet he was ready to confer far greater benefits on her, though she was a Samaritan. Had she known the value and freeness of the gift of God, and her perishing need of it, and had she been apprized of the character, authority, and grace of him with whom she was conversing, she would have made her request to him for "living water;" and if she asked him, he would certainly bestow it upon her. "The gift of God" may either mean, in general, his free mercy and grace to sinners, or the gift of his own Son to be their Saviour, and procure for them all spiritual blessings: but the *living water* seems especially to mean the Holy Spirit, in his sanctifying and comforting influences, through which the purchased salvation is applied to the soul. (*Marg. Ref.*) His influences may be compared to water, because of the inexhaustible abundance that is provided; the gratuitous manner in which they are communicated; and their purifying, fertilizing, refreshing efficacy. This is *living water*, as it confers, sustains, and perfects, spiritual life, and as it is continually flowing pure from the Fountain of life for our use, till we come to the enjoyment of eternal life. All who know the value of these blessings, and the power and grace of Christ, ask him for them; and all who ask obtain them. (vii. 37—39.) But the Samaritan woman supposed that our Lord meant *running water*, which is sometimes called *living water*. She therefore inquired whence he was to obtain it? He could not get it out of that well, which was very deep, as he had nothing to draw with; and there was no other well nigh at hand. Yet she seems to have had some idea of his being an extraordinary person, and therefore she addressed him with a degree of respect; intimating, that if he spoke of some water to be procured in a supernatural manner, she wished to be informed, whether he were more honourable than the patriarch Jacob, who used that well, and left it to his posterity? She called Jacob the father of the Samaritans, though they were generally of another race. (*Marg. Ref.*) Our Lord, however, let this groundless claim pass unnoticed; and observed, that "whosoever drank of that water, would "thirst again;" he would soon be as thirsty as ever, and might at length die of thirst, and finally perish. But the nature of the water of which he spoke was such, that "whosoever drank of it, would thirst no more for ever." He would thirst for more and more of it, but it would never at hand to satisfy his desires; it would deliver him

18 For thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast "is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art "a prophet.

20 Our "fathers worshipped in this mountain; "and ye say, That in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

Deut. xxi. 10. Josh. viii. 33-35. Jer. ix. 6, 7. 2 Kings xviii. 28-32. 1. 1 K. xxix. 3. 1 Chr. xxi. 25. xxii. 1. 2 Chr. vi. 6. vii. 12. Ps. lxxviii. 59. lxxxvii. 1, 2. cxxxiii. 13, 14.

Gen. xv.
xxviii. 2. 7.
31. Num. v. 29.
Ruth. ii. 10, 11.
Jer. ii. 20. Ezr.
xvi. 32. Mal. ii.
12. Rom. vii. 5.
1 Cor. vii. 2.
11. Heb. xiii. 4.
d. 29. 143. 2 Kings
xv. 12.
Luke vii. 2.
1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.
xvi. 14. vii. 40.
18. 17. Luke vii.
16. xxiv. 14.
1. Gen. xii. 6. 7.
xxviii. 18-20.

from vitiated inclinations, and be within him, as a well, or fountain of water, springing up in all holy affections and consolations, till perfected in everlasting life; as it certainly would be, notwithstanding all possible opposition from the world, the flesh, and the devil. This language the woman did not understand; and she answered as one in amazement, or half-disposed to ridicule, desiring Jesus to give her some of this extraordinary water, that she might no more feel the inconvenience of thirst, nor have the trouble of fetching water from the well. *Nothing, &c.* (11.) "Travellers provide themselves with small leathern 'buckets, because the wells in those parts are furnished 'with no apparatus for drawing.' (*Thevenot.*) 'The 'well, now shown as Jacob's well, is thirty-five yards 'deep.' (*Maunderell.*)

V. 16—18. The woman did not understand our Lord's words, because she had no conviction of sin, or thirst after spiritual blessings: yet she would afterwards remember them with great advantage. But to prepare her for receiving the truth, he next called her sins to remembrance; for this was no doubt part of his design, when he said, "Call thy husband, and come hither." But she, willing to conceal her shame, endeavoured to evade the subject, by declaring that she had no husband: and Jesus allowed the truth of this assertion, in a manner which showed that he was fully acquainted with all her past conduct. Whether all her five husbands had died, or she had been divorced from some of them, is not certain; but at that time she cohabited with a man who was not her husband. Either she had left her husband, to live with another man, (though in this case it could hardly have been said that she had no husband;) or the person with whom she lived was not her husband, but the husband of another woman: but this was such an express declaration, that polygamy was unlawful, and that the secondary wife was in fact an adulteress, as would hardly have been made, without further explanation, on this occasion. So that it is probable she lived with a man, to whom she had never been married according to the custom and order of that age and people. This shows, that a recognition before witnesses, and duly authenticated, is necessary to marriage, and distinguishes it from fornication. "Five husbands 'from whom thou hast been divorced for thy adulteries.' (*Whitby.*) This is neither said, nor hinted at, in the narrative; neither is it probable. The adulteress was punishable by death, according to the Mosaic law: and it is likely, that the Samaritans so far regarded it, as not to suffer a woman, five times convicted of adultery, and divorced for it, to escape with impunity.

1 Ez. xiv. 3. xxv. 21 Jesus said unto her, Woman believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now

is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.

V. 19, 20. This reference to the woman's past history by an entire stranger, when probably most of it was concealed from all her neighbours, satisfied her that Jesus was a Prophet, and she frankly confessed her conviction: but, to divert the conversation, she begged of him to inform her, whether the Samaritans or the Jews were right, in the grand subject of controversy between them. Adhering to the groundless pretence, that the Samaritans were descended from the stock of Israel, she observed that their fathers worshipped on mount Gerizim, the centre of their religion at that time; whereas the Jews contended that they ought to worship at Jerusalem. Abraham and Jacob erected altars at Shechem, which was very near to mount Gerizim; and from that mountain God ordered the blessings to be pronounced, whilst the curses were spoken from mount Ebal. (*Marg. Ref.*) From these and similar premises, the Samaritans inferred, that Gerizim was the place where the temple of God ought to have been builded, and his sacrifices offered; and that the Jews were schismatics and sectarians; and they rejected the greatest part of the Old Testament, perhaps because it so expressly and continually declared, that Zion was the place which God had chosen for his residence. Indeed, there was no temple on mount Gerizim, till Sanballat built one there, after the days of Nehemiah. This had been destroyed by John Hyrcanus, about one hundred and thirty-one years before Christ: but probably it had been rebuilt, though with less magnificence. (*Note, &c. Neh. xiii. 28.*) The Samaritans, however, thought the example of the patriarchs greatly in their favour; and this woman, notwithstanding her immorality, was eager in the controversy.

V. 21—24. In answer to this, our Lord assured the woman, (if she would believe him as a Prophet,) that the time was even then arrived, when all these disputes would be superseded: for neither mount Gerizim nor Jerusalem should much longer be appropriated to the worship of God. The Samaritans, indeed, "worshipped they knew not what:" they knew not the perfections of God; their worship was not regulated according to his commandments; their hope of acceptance was not grounded on his promises; their whole system was a fabric of superstition, ignorance, or imposture, a human device, without any divine rule or warrant. On the other hand, the religion of the Jews was from God; they had his oracles entire; a succession of prophets had been sent among them; they worshipped the true God as revealed by his word, in the ordinances which he had instituted, and with a ground of assurance that they would be accepted, provided they were not hypocritical in their services. Especially the promised

Saviour was to arise from among the Jews: to him all the types referred, all the prophets bare witness, and all believers looked and found salvation; and through him all their ordinances became means of grace. Yet the appointed period of that dispensation was come; and thenceforth the true worshippers would not be restricted to any place for their spiritual sacrifices. God was about to be revealed as the Father of all believers in every nation; and he would seek out vast multitudes, to worship him in spirit and truth. For as he is a Spirit, immaterial, holy, omnipresent, and intimately acquainted with the inmost soul of man; so they, who acceptably "worship him, must worship him in spirit and truth." (*Marg. Ref.*) Splendid temples, costly vestments, multiplied sacrifices, and external ceremonies, as types and shadows, have nothing in them suited to his nature; and could only be appointed for a time, to be figures of good things to come: the spirit, or the soul, of man, as influenced by the Holy Spirit, must worship God, and have communion with him, knowledge of his perfections, reverential fear, humiliation as creatures and sinners, hope in his mercy and truth, regard to his word, love of his excellency, earnest desires after his favour and image, gratitude for his goodness, delight in his service, zeal for his glory, submission to his will, and cheerful dependence on his grace and providence. These spiritual affections, expressed in fervent prayers, supplications, praises, and thanksgivings, form that worship of an upright heart, in which God delights and is glorified. The redemption of Christ, the ministry of the word, and the work of the Holy Spirit, concur in forming such worshippers, and rendering them accepted; and nothing can be pleasing to God, which has not in it something of this nature. "Not with carnal sacrifices, but with those 'spiritual sacrifices, which are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.'" We must have just and awful thoughts of the divine majesty, often representing him to our thoughts as a God of infinite purity and justice, as well as of power and wisdom; one who is always present with us, and beholds all our secret thoughts and actions, in order to a future recompense. We must endeavour to resemble him as much as may be in holiness and righteousness, in truth, in goodness, and in mercy. And we must worship God from spiritual principles, a sincere love, and filial reverence of him, and to spiritual ends, that we may promote his glory, and do what is pleasing in his sight; and after a spiritual manner serving him with the whole heart, soul, and mind, and with a fervency of spirit." (*Whitby.*) The immediate and powerful influences of the Holy Spirit are indispensably necessary in forming such worshippers. (*Marg. Ref.*)

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that *Messias cometh, which is called Christ: y when he is comé, he will tell us all things.

26 Jesus saith unto her, * I that speak unto thee am he.

27 ¶ And upon this came his disciples, and * marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

28 The woman then ^b left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

29 * Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

30 Then * they went out of the city, and came unto him.

31 In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, * Master, eat.

32 But he said unto them, * I have

meat to eat * that ye know not of.
33 Therefore ^b said the disciples one to another, hath any man brought him *aught* to eat?

34 Jesus saith unto them, ⁱ My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, * and to finish his work.

35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; ¹ for they are white already to harvest.

36 And ^m he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that ^a both he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together.

37 And herein is that saying true, * One soweth, and another reapeth.

38 I ^p sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: * other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

V. 25, 26. The woman did not object to this, yet she seems not to have been fully satisfied: and therefore she was disposed to leave the matter undecided, till the advent of the Messiah, who she expected would come, and finally determine all those controversies, and give them more complete instructions. But our Lord, (not having the same reasons for caution as he had among the Jews, who were disposed either to excite insurrections, or to accuse him to the Romans;) without any reserve informed her, that he was indeed the Messiah: and doubtless a power accompanied his words, which enabled her to believe in him. and to understand in some measure the nature of his salvation. 'Christ, leaving the proud Pharisees, communicates the treasures of everlasting life to 'a poor sinful woman, and a stranger, refuting the gross errors of the Samaritans, and defending the true service of God, which was delivered to the Jews: but so, that he calleth both of them back to himself, as one whom alone all the fathers, and all the ceremonies of the law, did regard.' (Beza.)

V. 27. The disciples themselves had just before been conversing with the Samaritans, while purchasing provisions; and on other occasions, intercourse of *that kind* must have taken place between Jews and Samaritans: but that Jesus should enter into free conversation with a woman, who was an entire stranger and also a Samaritan, and appear very earnest in it, was very wonderful to them. It is not at all likely, that the mere circumstance of conversing with a woman should excite this wonder: and as to the absurd and illiberal traditions and maxims of the Rabbies, which some learned men have adduced on this subject, it is manifest, that our Lord never referred to any of them, except in order to enter a protest against them. The women, with whom he conversed in general, were Jewesses, and persons well known

to him and his disciples; but this woman was a Samaritan, against whom even the disciples were strongly prejudiced, and likewise unknown to them. They had, however, too high a veneration for their Lord, to ask any questions concerning his motives or intentions.

V. 28-30. In the mean time the woman, being greatly affected with what she had heard, and with the discovery of the promised Messiah, left her water-pot, (either through forgetfulness, being full of other thoughts, or because she intended to come again to draw water,) and, hasting to the city, she excited the attention of her neighbours, by calling on them to go with her, and see a most extraordinary Person, who had told her the history of her whole past life. And was not this the Christ? Indeed he had told her that he was; but she wished them to go, and judge for themselves. Thus she, who left the town an ignorant, bigoted, and licentious woman, by a miracle of grace, returned thither, as it were an evangelist, to preach Christ to her neighbours; who were so impressed by her words, and by the power which attended them, that they went forth in great numbers to meet Jesus.

V. 31-38 In this interval, the disciples were earnest with Jesus to partake of the provisions which they had brought; but he was so much engaged in the labour of love, that he thought no more of his weariness, hunger, or thirst. He therefore told them, "that he had meat to eat that they knew not of;" and when they did not understand his meaning; he added, that "his meat was to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work." "It was the Father's will, that he should labour, preach, work miracles, fulfil all righteousness in the midst of difficulties and temptations, and at length finish his work on earth by his sufferings on the cross. This was *his meat*: he had an appetite and a relish for it, and found

x. 41. 42. 43. 45.

153. 42.

1 Gen. xxxiii. 23.

1 Cor. i. 1. 7. 7.

10. 2 Luke. 10.

20. 25. 30. 35.

32. Acts xvi. 12.

4. Luke. xiii. 5.

10. 2 Cor. vi. 1.

32. Rev. i. 20.

2. Rom. xiii. 10.

1. Acts. i. 9. 10.

12. 25. x. 3.

1. Acts. i. 30. 35.

1. Acts. i. 26. 32.

1. Acts. i. 32. 1.

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39 ¶ And * Many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him, * for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, * they besought him that he would tarry with them: * and he abode there two days.

41 And * many more believed, * because of his own word;

42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: * for we have heard *him* ourselves, * and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

43 ¶ Now, * after two days, he departed thence, * and went into Galilee:

44 For Jesus himself testified, * that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

45 Then when he was come into Galilee, * the Galileans received him, * having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: * for they also went unto the feast.

46 So Jesus came again into * Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain * nobleman, * whose son was sick at Capernaum.

47 When * he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him * that he would come down and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

48 Then said Jesus unto him, * Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir * come down ere my child die. *

Matt. ix. 23. 24.

Luk. e. viii. 40.

Mat. x. 1. 2.

Deut. xvi. 10.

Luk. ii. 42-44.

Ix. 53.

h. ii. 1-11. xii. 2.

John xii. 20.

1 Cor. xii. 20.

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every part of it, a delight and refreshment to his soul, because God was glorified, and men were benefited by it. As, therefore, an opportunity was afforded him of being employed in his work, he intimated to the disciples, that he would postpone eating till afterwards. It was indeed, about four months to the time of the natural harvest; yet, if they looked up and observed the Samaritans coming to hear his doctrine, they would see that the fields were even then white unto a better harvest, which he was about to reap, in consequence of the seed that he had just sown, by speaking to the Samaritan woman. And they ought to consider, that this kind of harvest was far more important than any other; for not only would the laborious reaper be graciously rewarded with eternal life, but they who were converted by his labours would be as "fruit gathered" into the same blessedness; and, whilst many, in one way or other, contributed to the sowing the seed, and gathering in the crop, they would all, at last, rejoice together in the success. This was the good work, in which he meant to employ them, as well as to labour himself; and in their case the proverb would be happily verified, that "one soweth, and another reapeth." He was about to send them out to preach in his name; and the labours of the ancient prophets, and of John Baptist, and especially his own ministry, would render their work comparatively easy, and they would be abundantly successful: thus they would enter into others' labours, and reap the harvest which sprang from what others had sown. (*Marg. Ref.*) This was accomplished after Christ's ascension, in the conversion of vast multitudes, both of Jews and Samaritans, by their ministry. The clause, "There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest," seems to have been meant of the fact, and not as a proverb; but how far it may be made use of to settle the chronology, or harmony, of our Lord's life and labours, must be determined by those whose studies have been more immediately directed to that object; which, after all, seems to be only of subordinate consequence.

V. 39-42. Many of the Samaritans were convinced

that Jesus was the Messiah, by what the woman had told them concerning him, and when they were come to him, and had heard his word, notwithstanding their rooted prejudices, they invited him to stay for a time among them, for their further instruction. Accordingly he abode two days with them, and doubtless showed them the evidences of his being the Messiah, and the nature of his kingdom; by means of which many more of them believed, and were fully assured that he was the Saviour of the world, that is, of all sinners throughout the world, who trust and obey him. This was the more wonderful, as we do not find that Jesus wrought any miracle among them. *Two days,* (40.) 'He abode there so long, that he might not condemn persons so desirous to learn of him; and no longer, that he might not neglect the Jews, or seem to prefer the Samaritans to them: and he commanded his disciples not to go to any city of the Samaritans. (*Matt. x. 5*;) because the Gospel was first to be preached to the Jews.' *The Saviour of the world.* (42.) 'That is,' says Mr. Cl., 'of the Jews; for it is not likely that the Samaritans thought of the salvation of the Gentiles.' But why might they not think so, who knew "that in the seed of Abraham were the families of the earth to be blessed?" Seeing the Samaritans were not Jews, had they used these words in that restrained sense, they would have excluded themselves from this salvation.' 'The world' never means the Jews, in opposition to the Gentiles.' (*Whitby.*) (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 43-45. (*Note; &c. Matt. xiii. 53-58.*) The proverb referred to was a general truth; yet the miracles that Jesus had wrought, and the reputation he had acquired at Jerusalem, procured him some influence among many of the Galileans who had been at the feast. It is, however, the general opinion, that Nazareth and its neighbourhood are here called "his own country;" and that this is assigned as the reason, why he went by another road to Cana, instead of going to Nazareth to reside, or even taking that city in his way.

evl 40. 1 Kings
xvii 13 — 13
Matt. viii 13
Mark vii 29, 30
18, 22, 24 Luke
xviii. 12. Acts
xiv 9 Rom iv.
20, 21 Heb xi.

50 Jesus saith unto him, ° Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth.

52 Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they

po 63. 1 Kings
xxvii 23.

V. 24—54. When our Lord was come again to Cana, the son of a certain nobleman, or *courtier*, (probably belonging to Herod's retinue,) lay dangerously ill at Capernaum, which was several miles distant. This courtier, hearing that Jesus was returned, came in person to Cana, and most respectfully entreated him to go with him and heal his son, who lay at the point of death. (Notes, &c. Matt. viii. 5—13. Luke vii. 1—10.) Upon this, our Lord rebuked the unteachableness of his countrymen, and their neglect of spiritual blessings, by observing that they would not believe in him, except they continually witnessed his power in working miracles, and received the temporal benefit of them; whereas the Samaritans had believed his word without any miraculous confirmation of it. This reproof, of the truth and justice of which the courtier was probably convinced, only influenced him more earnestly to entreat Jesus to go with him, ere his son died; for he believed he could recover him, if upon the spot; though he does not then seem to have conceived, that he could raise him from the dead, or heal him at a distance. But our Lord, in order to prove and increase his faith, ordered him to return home, as "his son lived," or *was recovered and out of danger*; and though the man had no proof of this but the word of Jesus, and no instance of this kind seems at that time to have occurred, yet he was enabled to believe it. He, therefore, set off home without hesitation, and being met by his servants, he found from them, that his son was instantaneously relieved from his fever, exactly at the time when Jesus had spoken the word: in consequence of this, both the courtier and his family became the avowed disciples of Christ. Some think that this was Chuza, Herod's steward. (Luke viii. 3.) Our Lord had wrought other miracles, but this was the second performed at Cana, and on his return from Jerusalem.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—15.

The success of the Gospel always exasperates proud unbelievers, however prudently its ministers behave; but it is best, in general, not to out-brave, but to give way to the fury of the persecutors, as far as consists with faithfulness and usefulness. In all our journeys, we should copy our Lord's example: into whatever place we come, we should endeavour to render our presence useful; and we ought always to subordinate our personal accommodations to that superior object. We should frequently meditate on his weariness, and his painful, exposed, and inconvenient situation, when he sat *thus* at the well; few would be cheerfully satisfied to journey, to rest, and to fare as he

said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour, the fever left him.

53 So the father knew that *it was* ° at the same hour in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth; ° and himself believed, and his whole house.

54 This *is* again ° the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.

q Ps. xxxiii. 9
evl 20 Matt.
viii. 6, 9 13.
r Luke xix. 9.
Acts ii 22 xvi.
15. 34. xviii. 6.

all 1—11.

did. This consideration may teach the poor, patience and contentment, and the rich, self-denial, simplicity, gratitude, and liberality. But let us observe, where and what the lost sheep of Christ are, when he comes to seek and save them; and how he meets with them frequently, when they are not at all thinking of him. If we now believe in his name; after a careful review of our character, thoughts, and plans, when he first began to make himself known to us, we shall, many of us at least, be constrained to confess, that we were as unworthy and unlikely, as much prejudiced against him, and apparently as far out of his way, as this poor Samaritan woman. This illustrates the riches of his grace, and should excite our humble gratitude. We may also remark, that bigotry and controversy are extremely inimical to piety and charity; they indispose men to communicate good, or to receive it from others; and thus, when they should be praying together, or edifying one another, they are separated by strong antipathy. Nay, they who are agreed in the most important matters, and only differ about subordinate points, are often most vehement in their animosity! But if we know the gift of God, and the excellency of Christ, we shall ask of him, and he will give us the blessings of salvation. If we are made wise in the things of God, we shall gladly take a hint from a stranger, or one of another sect or sentiment; and they, who are like Jesus, will readily counsel or help the meanest, the vilest, or the most prejudiced of mankind. Blessed be God, for the wells of salvation, and the waters of life; and that we are assured that God will give his Holy Spirit to all who ask him in the Saviour's name. Indeed, carnal men do not value these blessings; they only thirst for sensual pleasures, worldly honours, wealth, power, or splendour; and how largely soever they drink of these wasting and polluted streams, they will thirst again, and thirst for ever, unless they now drink the waters of life. But happy are they, who are "athirst for the living God," and for his image and favour! The trifles of this world will no more quiet them, than toys will content a hungry child; they will be importunate in prayer for the blessings which Jesus is exalted to bestow; and the more they perceive that "the well is deep," and that they cannot draw of themselves, the more earnest will they be in beseeching God to assist them by his Holy Spirit. When they have experienced his holy consolations, their thirst after sinful pleasures abates; the world appears worthless; an abiding change is manifested in their souls; he, who begun the good work, maintains it and carries it on; holy desires, purposes, and affections, spring up in the heart; and these are earnest and foretastes of everlasting life, and will be perfected in it.

CHAP. V.

Jesus goes up to Jerusalem, and at the pool of Bethesda, on the sabbath day, heals one who had been diseased thirty-eight years; and orders him to carry his bed. 1—9. The Jews demand of the man, who bade him carry his bed? Jesus finds him at the temple, and warns him; and he informs the Jews that Jesus had healed him, 10—15. They persecute

V. 16—26.

In vain do we enlarge on the comforts, privileges, and security of the new covenant, in vain do we represent the preciousness and love of Christ, to the *unhumbled* sinner. He can “see no beauty in him.” no desirableness in his salvation; he will not apply for the healing of his soul, before he feels his sickness, nor for the binding up of his heart, till it is broken by a sense of guilt and danger. We should, therefore, lay open the law as the ministration of condemnation, and endeavour to put men in remembrance of their crimes, that their mouths may be stopped, and their thoughts turned from other objects to their own hearts and lives. When the word of God is faithfully opened, and skilfully divided, it often reaches the case, as it were, at one stroke; and thus it produces both a conviction of sin in the outward conduct, and a discovery of the evil that lay concealed within. Indeed, the sinner, when thus attacked, often employs every imaginable means to shift off the conviction; and even religious disputes are often had recourse to, for a plausible evasion. When those subjects are started, which tend immediately to detect men’s vanity, sensuality, luxury, avarice, or ambition, they will, as it were, say, ‘Come, let us talk of something else. What think you of this, or the other doctrine? Of this sect, this book, this sermon, or this preacher?’ They appear to be very religiously disposed, but it is in order plausibly to escape conviction; and in fact they say, ‘any subject but Herodias,’ or any thing even about Herodias, except, “that it is not lawful for thee to have her.” But the wisdom of the minister consists in pursuing the flying game through all these windings; and if they escape one net, to lay another for them. When any one shrinks from the touch, we may be sure there is a sore, and we should take courage to push vigorously our advantages. Indeed it is surprising and lamentable, to observe how the most abandoned persons will dispute about forms and notions. There is an essential difference between the ordinances of God, and the most specious human inventions, and many, called Christians, know not what they worship, or where salvation is to be found. And let it never be lost sight of, that a sinner cannot worship the only living and true God, with comfort and acceptance, except as in Christ, the God of salvation. We must not, however, over-value external distinctions, as no worshippers can be accepted, who do not worship God in spirit and truth; nor indeed could any other be capable of enjoying felicity in him. As the Father seeketh such to worship him, let us beseech him to make us such, that we may offer spi-

Jesus, 16. He defends himself, asserting his personal and mediatorial dignity and authority, 17—32; appealing to the testimony of John, 33—35; to his miracles, 36: to the testimony of God by a voice from heaven, 37, 38, and to the scriptures, 39, 40. He exposes their unbelief, ambition, and ungodliness; and shows, that in disbelieving him, they disbelieved Moses also, 41—47.

ritual sacrifices, acceptable to him through Jesus Christ our Lord; and, if thus distinguished, let us rejoice and thank our God; for, in praising and adoring him, we shall find happiness to all eternity.

V. 27—42.

Even good men are very incompetent judges of what it becomes the Lord to do; but reverence will impose silence on them, even when greatly perplexed; and they will deeply abhor such blasphemous objections, as unbelievers often utter concerning things which they understand not. When the heart is much engaged in pursuit of the Pearl of great price, outward concerns will sometimes be neglected; and when our affections are greatly excited, we shall naturally be led to call on others to seek those blessings, which we see to be valuable beyond all comparison. Thus the greatest sinners become witnesses for Christ; and, from their own experience, they declare his love and truth to all around them. But no trembling sinners can be more earnest to hear the words of life, than some zealous ministers are, (and as all ministers should be,) to preach them. When we consider the Lord Jesus deeming his rugged path, his hardships, his labours, and his whole work on earth, as more pleasant to him than his necessary food; and when we remember, that his love and zeal are still unabated, whilst the exercise of them is attended with no suffering or fatigue: we may confidently seek to him for all the blessings of salvation: but we should also consider him as our example; and in our inferior services and lighter trials, it should be our “meat to do the will of God; and to finish his work.” This mind of Christ should be in all his disciples, but in his ministers especially. When the harvest is ripe, the husbandmen endure hardship, heat, thirst, and fatigue, to seize the opportunity of reaping it; and when sinners are disposed to hear the Gospel, we should deem the fields already white for harvest, and disregard personal inconveniences and self-denial, to improve the precious occasion. On the other hand, the husbandman, having sown his seed, waits patiently till the appointed weeks of harvest; and so should we, when we have sown the good seed of the word, though we do not presently see the fruit of our labours. Indeed, comparatively small success is enough to render this the most gainful employment in the world. Every soul converted will be the minister’s everlasting crown of rejoicing, and be for ever happy with him. Let us then patiently endure the heat and burden of the day: for as prophets, apostles, and martyrs, have laboured and suffered, in sowing that

2 ii 13. Ex. xxiii.
14-17. xxv.
23. Lev. xxiii.
2. Deut. xvi. 16.
Matt. iii. 15.
Gal. iv. 4.

AFTER this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2 Or. gate. Noh.
iii 1. xii 39.
b 15 xxii 9, 11.

2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the *sheep-market* a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

3 In these lay a great multitude of

impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

c Mat. xvi 30, 31.
d i Kings xlii. 2.
e Mark iii. 1-4.
f Prov. vii. 32.
g Rom. iii. 25.
h Rom. viii.
i Jam. v. 7.
j Ps. cxlix. 67.
k Prov. vi 4. 3.
l Ec. ix 10. Hos.
xiii. 13. Mat.
xiii. Luke xii.
24-25 xvi 16.
g 2 Kings v. 10-11.
f 1. Ec. xliii 17.

9. Zech. xlii. 1. xiv. 3 1 Cor. vi 11 1 John 1 7.

seed, of which we now reap the blessed harvest, without their toil and tribulation; so others may reap the crop with joy, of what we now sow in tears, because it all seems to be thrown away. Faithful ministers often labour long, and with little encouragement: but the seed is not lost, for others enter into their labours, and gather many souls unto Christ: and in that world, where ambition and envy will be no more, they will unite in rejoicing over that success to which they have all been instrumental. In the mean time, then, let us labour, (whether sowing or reaping,) in faith, hope, love, and patience. The chief usefulness of ministers is frequently found among those, who previously bore the worst characters, and were counted the most hopeless persons. Such are often the instruments of exciting others, by carrying a report of what they have heard and experienced; and the effects of the quick and powerful word of Christ, in detecting the thoughts and intentions of their hearts, and bringing to remembrance the sins of their past lives, are the general means by which men are brought to believe. Those, however, who hear and receive the word of God, have the witness in themselves, and shall know and be assured that Jesus is the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

V. 43.—54.



Pride, prejudices, and worldly prosperity, concur in keeping men from the Saviour: and those are happy afflictions, personal or domestic, which induce any to inquire after him. Indeed, the rich and honourable of the world seldom come to him, till some grievous trial shows them the vanity of their distinctions, and that they need other help than man can give, or wealth can purchase. This conviction, and a heart broken for sin, prepare the mind to see such suitableness in Christ, that signs and wonders are no longer needful, in order to a man's believing and humbly trusting in him. But we must submit to his rebukes, and renew our applications; we must simply credit his words and follow his directions, if we would have the blessing from him. Then experience will confirm and strengthen our faith; and we shall find that every event exactly accords with his declarations, and that all things in heaven and earth obey him. In this way, the knowledge of Christ spreads through families, and men find health and salvation to their souls. These miracles never cease: may we and ours seek to Jesus, and experience them for our good!

NOTES.

CHAP. V. V. 1. This is generally supposed to have been the feast of the passover: yet, perhaps, none of the Vol. IV.—No. 28.

evangelists mention all the passovers which occurred during our Lord's public ministry. But, after what was related in the former chapter, several things recorded by the other evangelists had taken place, before Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He had called several disciples to a stated attendance on him, wrought many miracles, and probably delivered the sermon on the mount.

V. 2—4. As the evangelist speaks of this pool being at Jerusalem at the time when he wrote, it has been conjectured, that he wrote his Gospel before the subversion of that city; but this is not decisive: for the pool might remain, even though the porches were destroyed, and the spot, on which the city stood, would be called Jerusalem, long after the temple and buildings were destroyed by Titus. Thus our Lord says, "*Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*" (Luke xxi. 24.) Many things are recorded or reported concerning this pool: but they do not appear deserving of implicit credit. It was situated near the *sheep-market*, or the *sheep-gate*, by which great numbers of these animals were driven into the city, to be sold for sacrifices, or for consumption. The name, *Bethesda*, signifies a *house of mercy*; and it seems to have been given it, on account of the miracles there wrought. The five porches, or porticos, were probably built on the several sides of the pool, for the accommodation of those who walked there to recreate themselves, or converse with their friends; but they became at length in a great measure appropriated to the use of those diseased persons, who came thither to be cured. Of these a great multitude were collected together; some of them being afflicted or disabled in one way, and some in another. Probably most of them were deemed incurable by ordinary methods; and therefore they were carried thither, to wait and hope for a miraculous recovery. For it pleased God, (in order to show that he had not forsaken his people, but that he was about to visit them again in mercy,) to send an angel, from time to time, to excite a visible and extraordinary commotion in the pool: and whenever this took place, it was found by experience, that the person, who first bathed in the pool after the troubling of the water, was perfectly cured, whatever disorder he had been afflicted with; but that others who bathed afterwards obtained no relief. Some have thought that this effect was produced only once a year, at the feast of the passover; and others, with more probability, that it occurred every sabbath. But if the troubling of the water took place so regularly, that the time might be certainly foreknown, it does not appear, that the diseased persons would have had any occasion previously to wait by the pool, as it would have sufficed for them to come at the appointed season. 'An angel

5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity ^b thirty and eight years.

6 When Jesus saw him lie, ^c and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, ^d Wilt thou be made whole?

7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, ^e I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming another steppeth down ^f before me.

8 Jesus saith unto him, ^g Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

9 And ^h immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: ⁱ and on the same day was the sabbath.

10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath-day:

it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.

11 He answered them, ^j He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

12 Then asked they him, ^k What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?

13 And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus ^l had conveyed himself away, ^m a multitude being in that place.

14 Afterward Jesus findeth him ⁿ in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: ^o sin no more, ^p lest a worse thing come unto thee.

15 The man departed, ^q and told the Jews that it was Jesus ^r which had made him whole.

went down, at some seasons appointed by God, though not fixed or foreknown by men.' (Bp. Hall.) The hypothesis of Dr. Hammond (though favoured by some of the ancient fathers,) which supposes that the washing of the numerous sacrifices, and the entrails of them, in this pool, had given it a salutary virtue; and that the angel was no other than a *Messenger*, sent by the priests or rulers to stir up the water, that this efficacy might be more powerfully exerted, is so unscriptural and so irrational, that it is wonderful it should ever have been thought of a second time, by any one, to whose imagination it might once occur. To mention nothing else, what were the brazen sea and the lavers in the courts of the temple provided for, and always replenished with abundance of water, but that the sacrifices, (as well as the priests and Levites,) might be washed upon the spot, and not carried out of the holy place, to a distant pool, for that purpose? It is probable that this miracle was not wrought for any length of time, and perhaps it ceased on this occasion. This may account for the silence of Josephus. He was himself not born when it happened: and though he might have heard the report of it, he would perhaps oppose speculation to fact; or, if he suspected it to be true, his dread of the marvellous, and fear of disgusting his pagan readers, might as well lead him to suppress this, as to disguise the passage through the Red Sea, and the divine voice from mount Sinai, in so mean and foolish a manner as it is known he does. And the relation, in which this fact stood to the history of Jesus, would render him peculiarly cautious in touching on it.' (Doddridge.) This miraculous effect seems to have been an emblem of the healing of men's souls by the Gospel, and by washing in "the Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness;" and, compared with the multiplied and continual miracles wrought by our Lord, it might also denote the efficacy of living grace under the old dispensation, as distinguished from its more extensive effects under the ordinances of the New Testament.

V. 5-9. Among the numerous pitiable objects found

in this place, our Lord was pleased to notice one especially, who had been disabled, perhaps by the palsy, for thirty-eight years. Many persons speak as if he had lain by the pool all that time; but that is without foundation, and utterly improbable. When, however, all other means failed, he had been taken thither, in hopes of a miraculous cure; and he persevered in waiting, notwithstanding tedious delays and bitter disappointments. This man our Lord selected from the rest, probably because his case was more desperate and lamentable than that of any other, even in this recess of misery; for he well knew how long he had been thus afflicted. In order to excite his attention and expectation, he asked him whether he was desirous of being made whole? a question which in his case might appear unnecessary; but which aptly represented the proposal of the Gospel to those, whose souls have long been diseased and disabled by sin. The man replied that he had neither friend nor servant to assist him, when the water was troubled; and, being very helpless, he had hitherto been precluded from a cure, by another stepping in before him. But Jesus at once bade him "take up his bed, and walk;" and though his disorder had been so long continued, yet it was instantaneously removed, and he was enabled to carry his bed, as a man in perfect health and vigour. This would be noticed by the more persons, as it occurred on the sabbath-day, when burdens were not allowed to be carried; by which means the power of Jesus would be the more known and attended to. 'There is no evil so inveterate, that Christ cannot cure it.' (Beza.)

V. 10-15. The Jews here mentioned seem to have been the Pharisees, scribes, or rulers: they found fault with the man for violating the sabbath-rest by carrying his bed; though it was evidently done in honour of God, as manifesting the miraculous cure which had been performed. He therefore replied, that the very person who had made him whole, even he had ordered him to take up his bed, and walk. But they, not at all noticing the miracle, only inquired, Who had ordered him to carry

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16 And therefore did the Jews^b persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath-day.

17 But Jesus answered them, ^a My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also, that

God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

19 Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, ^a Verily, verily, I say unto you, ^b The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: ^c for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

his bed? It is probable that they suspected who it was, and were the more excited to opposition by that circumstance. Our Lord, however, had so speedily and silently withdrawn from the place, where multitudes were assembled, that the man was not able to inform them who his Benefactor was. But soon after, probably on the same day, Jesus met him at the temple, whither he had repaired, no doubt to render thanks for his unexpected cure, and perhaps to offer a sacrifice of praise; and Jesus called his attention to the greatness of the unmerited benefit which he had received, and warned him to sin no more, lest a still worse evil should befall him. This was an intimation that his disorder had originated from some youthful irregularities, which were well known to Jesus, though committed before he, as man, was born. And it was thus implied, that repentance and its genuine fruits would be the best evidence of the sincerity of the man's gratitude. As he had been grievously afflicted for thirty-eight years, we cannot easily conceive of a worse temporal evil which could afterwards befall him; but doubtless Christ spake of the wrath to come, which is infinitely worse.

V. 16. When the man had thus discovered to whom he owed his cure, he went and told the Jews, (saying nothing of his having ordered him to carry his bed;) and probably he expected, that they would honour his Benefactor; but on the contrary they prosecuted him as a sabbath-breaker; and it is likely that he was brought before the Sanhedrim, and spake what follows before that assembly. This view of the subject makes the discourse peculiarly interesting, and there is a dignity in it, that indeed is inexpressible.

V. 17, 18. In answer to the accusation brought against him, our Lord briefly observed, that "His Father" worked hitherto, and he worked." Thus he called God his Father in a peculiar sense, and claimed the prerogative of acting as God the Father did, without being restricted by rules laid down for his creatures and subjects; for the miracle which had been performed was not wrought by human labour, but by the immediate energy of his divine power. God finished the work of creation in six days, and rested on the seventh; but he incessantly worketh in upholding the universe, and in continuing the course of nature, by his providential superintendency. In this work the Son concurs, by an union of will and operation, "upholding all things by the word of his power." His work also, as Mediator, was to be conducted by the same unremitted and uninterrupted action as that of sustaining the universe: this miracle was a part of it well suited to the sabbath-day; and he claimed the prerogative of carrying on his holy work on that day, as well as on others, even as the

Father conducts his providential operations on every day alike. Unless we suppose this to have been our Lord's meaning, there could be no argument in this plea; for the example of the Creator, in "working hitherto," can be no reason why a creature, a servant, a mere man, should do as he pleased on the sabbath-day. The divine power of the miracle proved Jesus to be the Son of God; and he insisted on the prerogative of working with and like unto his Father, as he saw good, without giving any account of his conduct. These ancient enemies of Christ plainly understood him, (though modern opposers of his Deity cannot!) and were thus rendered more violent in their prosecution; not only charging him with sabbath-breaking, but with blasphemy, in calling God his *own* Father, (*ιδιος*;) "and making himself equal with God" in perfection and operation. "If God my Father, working on the sabbath, doth not violate the sabbath; neither do I, when I work on the sabbath violate the sabbath. This conclusion cannot stand, unless the equality of the persons of the Father and of the Son be determined." "Making himself equal with God," "These are the words of the evangelist, not only repeating, but approving, what the Jews rightly collected from the words of Christ." (*Beza*.) "The whole nation of the Jews thought God their Father;—and they could not have accounted it blasphemy to have used that phrase, had they not interpreted it in so high and appropriate a sense." (*Doddridge*.)

V. 19. In answer to this further charge, Jesus solemnly assured them, that "the Son could do nothing of himself." As the Father and the Son are one in nature and perfection, so they are one in will, counsel, and operation; and it is impossible that the Son can do any thing of himself, apart from what the Father doeth. But being intimately acquainted with every thing that the Father doeth, he co-operates with him in all his works of creation and providence; so that it is equally proper to ascribe them to the Son as to the Father; for the Son not only worketh *similar* works to those of the Father, but the *same* works, whatever they be. (*Marg. Ref.*) "Christ did not say, *He doeth like unto them*; but *the same things in like manner*." (*Beza*.) Creation, the resurrection of the dead, our Lord's own resurrection, and many other works of omnipotence, are sometimes ascribed to the Father, at others to the Son, at others to the Holy Spirit;—the marginal references fully prove. As simply the works of God, they may, with equal propriety, be ascribed to any one of the three persons in the sacred Trinity; but the expressions, "of himself," "seeth," "sheweth," seem to refer to the delegated authority and power of the Son, as Mediator; and his perfect concurrence with the Father.

17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

would have believed me: 'for he wrote of me.

47 But 'if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

authority, and pre-eminence; whilst they had no real desire of that honour which God alone confers on the humble and lowly in heart. How then could they welcome a Messiah, who had no worldly preferments to bestow; whose appearance was as mean as his doctrine was humiliating; and whose sharp rebukes must needs exasperate their haughty and envious minds?

V. 45-47. Our Lord further observed, that there was no occasion for him to become the accuser of the unbelieving Jews to his Father; nor was this the end of his coming among them, though he so sharply reproved them to their faces; for they had another accuser, even Moses, in whose law they trusted for salvation. Yet his writings, which were full of types, prophecies, and promises of him, would certainly condemn them for rejecting him, as well as for their other sins. Had they really believed the testimony of Moses, they would certainly have welcomed that Prophet of whom Moses wrote: but, seeing they treated the predictions of Moses with disregard, and did not really believe them, it would be wonderful, indeed, if they had believed in Jesus. This whole passage is peculiarly suited to show us, in what light to consider the writings of Moses and the prophets, or the Old Testament, nearly, if not entirely, as we have it. Our Lord certainly sanctioned the general opinion of the Jews, not only that these books were *authentic or genuine*, but also that they were *divinely inspired*, and, as such, worthy of the most implicit credence and confidence. And in particular, he has given his full attestation to the books of Moses, not as compiled from his records, but as written in their present form, by Moses himself. Though our Lord spake thus openly on this occasion, yet his persecutors were so overawed, that they proceeded no further against him, for his time was not yet come.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-14.

The whole earth appears to a considerate mind as a *Bethesda*, a great hospital, full of those whom sin hath made miserable, and to whom the compassion of God affords the means of relief and comfort. As, therefore, "his mercies are over all his works," and even those who most deserve misery experience his goodness during their continuance here, the mercy of man should also coincide, and we should endeavour to alleviate the sufferings of the vilest, and to do them what good we can; and, as medicines are created and discovered to relieve the diseases of our bodies, which all originate from sin, we should attempt to render the poor, partakers of this benefit by every means in our power. In this view, every *hospital and dispensary* is a *Bethesda*; and they would be more completely deserving of that name, if more pains were taken to do good to the souls, as well as to heal the bodies, of those who resort to them. Yet, alas, how few of those, who in this manner obtain relief, are found in the house of

God, offering the sacrifice of thanksgiving to their great Physician! How few of them live thenceforth to his glory! How few take warning to "sin no more, lest a worse thing should come unto them!" But the place where the Gospel is preached, and divine ordinances are administered, is the true *Bethesda*: thither the poor and helpless should repair, and hope and wait for a cure, whatever their spiritual maladies are, or however inveterate they have become. Though the multiplied miracles of converting grace, which better ages witnessed, are not generally vouchsafed among us, yet we still see instances of such, as, by washing in the Fountain which God hath opened, are made whole of their most desperate maladies. The whole power is indeed of God; yet they who would have the benefit must be watchful, earnest, and patient: they must not be supine or dilatory, but make haste to wash and be clean; and then they should endeavour in their turn to assist others also. Yet if any seem to meet with reiterated disappointments, they should still wait, hope, and seek; not neglecting the means of grace, or ceasing to labour and pray for the blessing: for sometimes they, whose case seems most hopeless, and who are ready to give up all for lost, are made partakers of mercy, peace, and spiritual health, when they least expect them. The Saviour perfectly knows, both how long men have been contracting habits of sin, and how long seeking the help and joy of his salvation; and he continually attends in his *houses of mercy*, to inquire of sinners whether they will be made whole? Yet it is a common case for men to come thither, who are in love with their disease, and only desirous of an excuse for the loathsomeness of it! But if we desire to be healed and saved in his way, we shall certainly at length obtain that blessing. When he speaks, power attends his word; and the ability of believers to perform such duties as are impracticable to others, and once were so to them, will best evidence their cure and recommend their Physician. Though Scribes and Pharisees object and revile; yet redeemed sinners must obey and honour their Benefactor, and follow the directions of Him, who hath restored health to their souls. By attending on the ordinances of God, they obtain further acquaintance with him; but without deliverance from the love, power, and allowed practice of known sin, there can be no well grounded hopes of escaping the wrath to come. Even in this life, how many hours, days, weeks, months, nay, years of pain, do some wicked men endure, through their momentary unlawful indulgences! And if such afflictions are heavy and tedious, whilst year after year men are confined to their beds, and made a burden to themselves and others, how dreadful will be the everlasting punishment of the wicked!

V 15-29.

We are still called to trust in him, whom Pharisees and infidels despise. As the Father worketh hitherto, so do!

CHAP. VI.

Jesus feeds five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes, 1—14. He withdraws from the multitudes, who purposed to make him a King, 15. His disciples put to sea without him, and meet with a storm; but he comes to them walking on the sea, 16—21. Being followed to Capernaum by multitudes, he

reproves their carnal views, and requires faith in him, 22—29. They demand a sign, like that of the manna, and he speaks of himself, as the Bread of life, &c. 30—59. Many are offended, and forsake him, 60—66. Peter, in the name of the twelve, professes steadfast faith in him, as the son of God; but Jesus pronounces one of them to be a devil, 67—71.

his co-equal Son, especially in carrying on and sustaining his new creation. May those declarations of his eternal power and Godhead, which enrage his enemies, fill our hearts with humble confidence and admiring gratitude! Nor ought we at all to regard those who accuse us of giving the glory of God to another: such objectors do not understand the mystery of the Father and of the Son; or perceive that an union of essence, will, and operation, renders it for ever impossible to honour the one without honouring the other also. The eternal Son is the adequate Object of the Father's love: he possesses all his perfections, and performs all his works; he creates or destroys; he raises from the dead, and quickens whom he will; our life is hid in him; our future judgment is committed to him; and, as dwelling in human nature, he exercises all power and authority throughout the universe, that all men may honour him, even as they honour the Father. Unless, therefore, we can honour the Father too much, we need not fear honouring the Son more than we ought. Here is no danger of excess, but much of defect: all the adoration and worship rendered to the Son is directed to the glory of God the Father; and they who honour not the Son will be condemned as enemies and despisers of the Father that sent him. May we then hear his voice, and believe his testimony, as he revealeth God to man! thus our faith and hope will be in God: we shall have everlasting life, and not come into condemnation; for this is the important passage from death to life. And may his voice reach the hearts of those, who are dead in sin, that they may arise from the dead, repent, and do works meet for repentance; and thus prepare for the solemn day of retribution! For the hour will soon arrive, "in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." May we now live as those, who desire then to be found a people prepared for the Lord!

V. 30—38.

Let none treat the things above stated as assertions or conjectures; for they are authenticated by the most unanswerable testimony; and they are published, that sinners may hear and fear, believe and be saved. To the blessed Redeemer all the servants of God bear witness; but he cannot derive from them any addition to his essential glory. "From his fulness they have all received:" if they be burning and shining lights, they glow with his love, and shine by his splendour: he honours them, and they reflect a little

of his glory. Many are willing to hear such teachers, and are pleased with their doctrine: but they obey not the word; they have no root in themselves, and so in time of temptation they fall away. Not only the works which Christ finished on earth bare witness to him, as the Son of God; but those also that he hath wrought since his ascension into heaven, in the spread and success of the Gospel, demonstrate the same truths; and the voice of God, accompanied by the power of the Holy Ghost, and made effectual to the conversion of sinners, still proclaims, that this is the beloved Son, in whom the Father is well pleased: and that all who would be saved must hear and obey him.

V. 39—47.

When the hearts of men are occupied by pride, ambition, and the love of the world, there is no room for the word of God to abide in them. Thus, many profess to believe that in the Scriptures they have eternal life: yet they bestow little pains to understand these sacred oracles: others search them with a proud, curious, or prejudiced mind, and so cannot see that they testify of Christ: others admit this doctrinally, yet they do not come to him, that they may have life. Being destitute of the love of God, they are careless about spiritual blessings; or they imagine they shall be able to obtain them in some other way; or they are proud of their knowledge: they seek honour one of another; and they are glad to follow carnal, self-sufficient teachers, who come in their own name, who coincide with their views, flatter their pride, connive at their sins, and seek their own ends by so doing. Alas, how many trust in their attachment to some form of doctrine, or to some renowned head of a party, who no more enter into the real meaning of those doctrines, or into the views of the persons whose names they bear, than the Jews did into that of Moses! Thus the creeds and formularies of many sects and establishments will suffice for the condemnation of multitudes, who glory in belonging to them: and it is well, if the sermons many preach, and the books which they publish, do not appear in judgment against them, to accuse them of not believing or practising what they preached or printed. Let us, then, search, and pray over, the Scriptures, as men intent on finding eternal life; let us observe how Christ is the grand Subject of them, and daily to apply to him for that life which he bestows; let us seek "that honour which cometh from God only," and not fear the reproach of men; and thus, by patient continuance in well-doing, let us seek for glory, honour, and immortal felicity.

n Matt. xiv. 13.
Mark vi. 21-22.
Luke ix. 10-12.
n Num. xxxv. 11.
Josh. xii. 3. Mar.
iv. 18. v. 29.
Luke v. 1.
c. 23. xxi. 1.
d Matt. iv. 24, 25.
viii. 1. xxi. 5.
2. xiv. 31.
xv. 0, 31. Mark
vi. 33.
e 15. Matt. xiv. 23.
xv. 29. Luke vi.
12, 13. ix. 28.
f 13. g. 1. xi. 85.
g 13. h. 1. B. x.
xii. 6. &c.

AFTER these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias.

2 And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.

3 And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

4 And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

5 When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

6 (And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.)

7 Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley-loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

10 And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

11 And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

12 When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

13 Therefore they gathered them to-

gether, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley-loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

14 Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world.

15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force to make him a King, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

16 And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea,

17 And entered into a ship, and went over the sea towards Capernaum: and it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.

18 And the sea arose, by reason of a great wind that blew.

19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.

20 But he saith unto them, It is I, be not afraid.

21 Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

22 The day following, when the people, which stood on the other side of the sea, saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone:

NOTES.

CHAP. VI. V. 1-21. These things did not immediately follow the preceding discourse: but omitting the things which Christ had done between the second passover, and the approach of the third, and which are recorded by the other evangelists, the apostle John selected this history, because of the copious and most important sermon which followed, and which had been passed over by the other sacred historians. (Beza.) (Notes, Matt. xiv. 13-33. Mark vi. 30-52. Luke ix. 10-17.) We find from this evangelist, that the bread multiplied on this occasion was made of barley; though the promised land abounded with wheat. The fragments must be gathered up, not only to ascertain the greatness of the miracle; but to prevent waste in any good thing which God hath created. The multitudes expected that

the Messiah would be a Prophet, as well as a King; they had a temporary conviction, from the miracle Jesus had wrought, that he was the Messiah; they concluded that the greatest advantages might be expected under a leader, who was able in this manner to maintain his followers; and they probably imagined that he would not be displeased to have a kind of constraint laid upon him, to declare himself the expected King of Israel. In these designs the apostles perhaps were ready to concur, by reason of their remaining ambition and carnal prejudices. The language of the sacred writer in the twenty-first verse implies something marvellous, in the immediate transition of the vessel to the intended harbour. The geography of these regions at that time is so imperfectly known, that several things relative to it must be left in a measure of obscurity, amidst the discordant opinions of learned writers.

30 They said therefore unto him, ¹ What sign shewest thou then, that we may ² see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

31 Our ³ fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, ⁴ He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, ⁵ Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my

Father giveth you ⁶ the true Bread from heaven.

33 For the Bread of God is he which ⁷ cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 Then said they unto him, Lord, ⁸ evermore give us this bread.

35 And Jesus said unto them, ⁹ I am the Bread of Life: ¹⁰ he that cometh to me shall ¹¹ never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

God in all his perfections, more than any other good work can do: and though it doth not justify as a good work, but by receiving Christ for our righteousness, yet, without it, no other good work can be accepted. So that faith in Christ may especially be called *the work of God*; and it was that act of obedience to which the Jews were then called, in order to obtain the blessing of eternal life. — They who seek to please God without faith, are diligent to no purpose. Should any one apply to a physician, and ask him for what sum of money he would undertake to cure him? And the physician should answer in these words: All the money which I require is, that thou wilt confide in me, and be fully assured that I seek nothing but thy recovery and established health: Who would, from such an answer, conclude, that this confidence was in fact money, which the physician demanded from the sick man, that he might follow his salutary counsels? They are, therefore, evidently ridiculous, who from this passage infer that *faith is a work*, and that we are justified by our works. (*Beza.*)

V. 30—35. So long as the Jews imagined that Jesus was about to lead them forth to liberty, victory, and dominion, they were ready to avow themselves his followers; but when he demanded faith in him, in order to the attainment of eternal life, they perceived that his doctrine clashed with their carnal expectations, and their strong attachment to the Mosaic law, and the glosses of the Scribes, and traditions of the elders, (which indeed made it of none effect); they therefore began to question his being the Messiah. Some of them at least demanded, what sufficient evidence he could produce, to convince them that eternal life might be obtained by faith in him? He had indeed once fed some thousands with barley-bread and fish in a miraculous manner; but what was that, in comparison to the wonders performed in the days of their great lawgiver, when two millions of their forefathers had been fed with manna for the space of forty years; which, both in respect to its excellency, and the manner in which it was given them, might be called “the bread which God gave them from heaven to eat?” (*Marg. Ref.*) To this our Lord replied, with his usual strong affirmation, that Moses had not given them that bread: he had used no means to obtain it for them, much less did he create it; nor did it really come from heaven, but merely from the upper region of the air. Whereas God, even his Father, who gave their ancestors that typical bread for the temporary sustenance of their natural lives, now gave them the true Bread from the heaven of heavens, for the eternal

salvation of their souls: for the Bread of God, emphatically so called, was that which descended from heaven, to give life to perishing sinners all over the world. It is plain that the Jews did not understand the meaning of our Lord: yet many of them had much reverence for him, and supposed that he alluded to some unknown benefit which he meant to confer on them; and therefore they seriously, though ignorantly, desired him to “give them “evermore that bread” of which he spake: for the address is such that we cannot understand it as used in a deriding manner. Jesus therefore more explicitly declared, that by “the Bread of Life” he meant himself; and that by coming to him, and believing on him, they might receive, and be sustained by, that Bread unto everlasting life. In his person, atonement, and mediation, he is the suitable and sufficient Sustenance of our souls. The sinner, who applies to him, and relies on him for pardon, grace, comfort, and all things pertaining to eternal life, will find his wants supplied, and his desires satisfied in an adequate manner; so that he shall never be tortured through hunger and thirst, without having a supply ever ready at hand to relieve and remove them. We may here observe that coming to Christ, and believing on him, signify the same in scriptural language; or rather the former is the never failing consequence of the latter. ‘Our Lord so much insists upon this metaphor, because it was familiar to the Jews, and used by their most celebrated writers.’ (*Whitby.*) Surely, this was neither his only nor his principal reason; for, had it not been a metaphor well adapted to convey his meaning, he would have rejected it, and substituted one more apposite. ‘It is very usual with the sacred writers to represent divine instructions as the food of the soul.’ (*Marg. Ref.*) ‘yet I can recollect no instance in which the instructor himself, as such, is called food, or any are said to eat him; much less, in which, as below, they are exhorted to “eat his flesh and drink his blood.”’ ‘So that Dr. Clarke’s laboured and ingenious criticism on this passage is far from being satisfactory; and however clear it may be of any such design, I fear it has misled many to a neglect of that great doctrine, the atonement of Christ, to which there seems in the context so express a reference.’ (*Doddridge.*) The whole of this discourse has such an inseparable connexion with the real atonement of our Lord’s death on the cross, and the life of faith in him and in that atonement, that, if these subjects be kept entirely out of sight, it is impossible to give any clear and satisfactory exposition of the passage. And this is a conclusive proof

n. 39, 40. 64. xii.
 10. sv 24. Luxe
 x² 31 1 Pet i
 8, 9

36 But I said unto you, ^m that ye also
have seen me, and believe not.

37 All ^a that the father giveth me
^o shall come to me : and him that cometh
to me, ^p I will in no wise cast out.

38 For ⁹ I came down from heaven,
not to do mine own will, but the will of
him that sent me.

39 And ^a this is the Father's will

which hath sent me, that of all which he hath ¹ given me ² I should lose nothing, ³ but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which ⁷ seeth the Son, ⁸ and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

1-3 -----x 27 35 54. vii. 15-13 36 v 24. 39 x. 28. xii. 50. xvii.
Rom v 21. vi. 23. 1 John ii 25 v 11-13 Jude 21.

of these doctrines, to all who revere the words of Christ ; according to that form of reasoning, which is called *reductio ad absurdum*.

V. 36 - 40. Our Lord next plainly told the Jews, that though they had seen him and his miracles, and seemed to be his zealous followers, yet they did not truly believe in him. But, should they forsake him, he should not be without disciples; for all whom the Father had given him, in his fore-knowledge and choice of them, and by the covenant of redemption made with him as their Surety, would come to him. The event is certain, they will come, but without any compulsion; for the discovery of their guilt, danger, and remedy, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, makes them willing and glad to come, and to renounce every hope and interest, which interferes with applying to him for salvation. At the same time this purpose and work of God perfectly consist with the general encouragements which he gives to all, who desire to come and share these blessings; as it was equally true, that he would in no wise cast out, on any account whatever, one individual who thus came to him; either at first refusing to admit him into his family, or afterwards casting him out, as Hagar and Ishmael were cast out of Abraham's family. In the original the negatives are multiplied, according to the idiom of the Greek language, to form the stronger negation; to assure us, that no degree of previous guilt, no inveterate habits of vice, no slavery to Satan, no secret decree of God, no involuntary mistake, no feebleness in attempting to apply to Christ, would induce him to reject a single person, who cometh to him for the salvation of his soul, with a sincere desire of that blessing, depending on his truth, power and grace, and using the means which he hath appointed. In this, the Father's will, which the Son came down from heaven to perform, perfectly concurs: it is his will, that not one of those given to the Son should be rejected or lost by him, in life or death; but that every one of them should be raised up to eternal felicity at the last day: and it is equally his will, that every one, who beholdeth the Son, who contemplates his character and work, and discerns the glory and suitableness of his salvation, so as to believe in him, and to intrust his soul in his hands, should have everlasting life, notwithstanding all possible hindrances and objections. These two views of the divine will, his *secret will* concerning those whom he hath chosen to salvation, and his *revealed will* concerning the actual salvation of every believer, are perfectly coincident; for no one will come till divine grace has subdued, and in part changed, his heart: and therefore no one who comes will

ever be cast out. When an awakened sinner is willing to come to Christ, if he finds the doctrines of the divine decrees too dazzling for his feeble eyes, he should look off from them to the general invitations and promises of the Gospel: but when he can bear to look at the former, he may find in them the source and reason of his willingness, and be encouraged to hope for the completion of that work which grace hath begun in his soul. But let every one beware of blaspheming or abusing these truths, which are evidently contained in Scripture; and which cannot be separated from our ideas of the divine sovereignty and perfections, or from a proper understanding of the entire free grace of God in the salvation of his people. *Giveth.* (37.) This expression is used by none but our Lord himself, and only in this chapter, in the tenth, (29,) and in the seventeenth of this Gospel: so that any diligent inquirer, by comparing the several verses, in which it is found, may form a judgment of its real import. 'All that the Father has graciously chosen to himself, and whom he giveth to me in consequence of a peculiar covenant, to be sanctified and saved by me, will certainly at length come unto me. I have given that sense of this important text, which, on serious and I hope impartial consideration, appeared to me most agreeable to the words themselves, and to the general tenour of Scripture. Mr. Le Clerc's gloss upon them appears to me unnatural, and Dr. Whitby's frivolous.' (*Doddridge.*) I own myself perfectly unable to understand what the latter writer means, in his long note on this text; unless it be, that all who believe in Christ will come to him; i. e. all who come, will come! 'Envy keeps some, covetousness others, and love of the praise of men keeps others from believing. And generally the unbelieving heart is an evil heart, and a reprobate mind, and a hard heart; and a foolish and slow heart. Meanwhile the better dispositions and preparations of the hearts of these here are to be looked upon as effects wrought by the preventing grace of God, and in that respect they are said to be drawn by the Father.' (*Hammond.*) It is not meant that this learned divine maintains the same views with the author. It is well known, that he contends earnestly for the contrary system. Yet he has here, without perhaps being aware of it, expressed himself in language suited to the views of all sober Calvinists; and has made a concession of too much importance to be passed over in the argument; a concession, which it will be difficult for any man to prove either unscriptural or irrational. 'From the gratuitous election in Christ by the Father flows the gift of faith which eternal life necessarily

a 43 52 60, 66.
y 12. Luke v.
20. xv. 2. xiv.
7. 1 Cor. x. 10.
John 16.
b 13 38, 51.
c vii. 27. Mat. xiii.
59, 56. Mark vi.
3. Luke iv. 22.
Rom. i. 3, 4. ix. 5.
1 Cor. xv. 47.
Gal. iv. 4.
d 64. xvi. 19. Mat.
xvi. 8. Mark iii.
33. Heb. iv. 13.
e 65. v. 44. viii.
43. xii. 37-40.
34. xiii. 18-20.
Jer. xiii. 23.
Matt. xii. 31.
Rom. viii. 7, 8.
f 45. ix. 13. 31.
Matt. xi. 25-27.
xvi. 17. Eph.
ii. 4-10. Phil.
i. 29. Col. ii. 12.
Tit. iii. 3-5.
g 52. Cant. i.
4. Jer. xxxi. 3.
Hos. xi. 4.
h 39, 40.
i Mark i. 2. Luke
i. 70. xviii. 31.
k 18. i. 3. liv. 13.
Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.
Mic. iv. 2. Eph. iv. 21, 22. 1 Thes. iv. 3. Heb. viii. 10. ii. x. 16.
1 Pet. v. 38-40. x. 27. xvi. 14, 15. Matt. xvii. 5. Eph. i. 17. 1 John iv. 1-2.

41 ¶ The Jews then ^a murmured at him, because he said, ^b I am the Bread which came down from heaven.

42 And they said, ^c Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, ^d Murmur not among yourselves.

44 No ^e man can come to me, ^f except the Father which hath sent me ^g draw him: ^h and I will raise him up at the last day.

45 It is ⁱ written in the prophets, ^k And they shall be all taught of God. ^l Every man therefore that hath heard,

and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

46 Not that ^m any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, ⁿ he hath seen the Father.

47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, ^o He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

48 I am ^p that Bread of life.

49 Your ^q fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, ^r and are dead.

50 This is ^s the Bread which cometh down from heaven, ^t that a man may eat thereof and not die.

51 I am the ^u living Bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever: and the Bread that I will give is ^v my flesh, which I will give for ^w the life of the world.

follows. Therefore faith in Christ is a certain testimony of our election, and consequently of our future glorification.' (*Beza.*) (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 41—46. These declarations of Christ excited the murmurs, and offended the prejudices of the Jews; especially that he said, he was "the Bread of Life." Being ignorant of his miraculous conception, they supposed that they had been acquainted with his parents; and they thought that he was a mere man born on earth, as other men are: how then could he say, that "He came down from heaven?" But Jesus required them to suppress their murmurs; for he must assure them, "that no man could come to him, except the Father drew him." The ground of this impossibility lies in the contrariety which subsists between the proud, worldly, unholy, rebellious, and ungodly nature of fallen man, and the humbling, spiritual, and holy nature of the Gospel. This cannot be taken away, except by the energy of divine grace: the Father, who sent the Son into the world to save sinners, must draw them to the Son, to be saved by him, or they will universally neglect his salvation. The Gospel finds none *willing* to be saved in the humbling, holy manner revealed in it: none are saved against their will; but the Lord by his grace disposes and draws sinners to Christ, and his drawing is the cause of their activity and diligence. He cures, as it were, the fever of the soul; he creates the appetite; he sets the provisions before the sinner; he satisfies him that they are wholesome and pleasant, and that he is welcome; and thus the man is drawn to come, and eat, and live for ever. Our Lord next reminded his hearers, that this accorded with the doctrine of their prophets, who had declared, that all who received the benefit of the Messiah's kingdom would be "taught of God," (*Notes*, Is. liv. 13. Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.) and thus, in fact, every man, who hath learned of the Father, (by hearing and believing his word,) those truths which he teaches, concerning his own perfections, his law, the future judgment, the eternal world, the evil of sin, the ruined estate of man, his need of mercy and grace, and the nature and glory of salvation, will infallibly believe in

Christ, and count all things but loss in comparison of him.—They, however, must not conclude that the Father would teach them personally; for none had seen the Father except his beloved Son, who was of him, and perfectly acquainted with him: they must, therefore, expect to be taught by his inward influence upon their minds, removing their prejudices, and humbling their pride, by means of his word, and of those ministers whom he sent among them. *Draw.* (44.). 'That is, as Augustin rightly teacheth, whom he shall of *unwilling* render *willing*.' For it is indeed true; that no one believes against his will: but we are willing, because it is given us that we should be willing. For it is not from man willing, 'but from God pitying.' (*Beza.*) *Taught*, &c. (45.) The texts referred to evidently relate, not to all the Jews, as some suppose but to the true Israel, the whole Church, of which Israel as a nation was a type. It is the new covenant, of which Christ is the Surety, (and not the old covenant made with Israel at Sinai,) which engages for this divine teaching to all those for whose benefit it was formed.

V. 47—51. After a repeated and most solemn assurance, that faith in him was the only and the certain method of obtaining everlasting life, and that he was the Bread of life, our Lord showed the Jews the superior excellence of his salvation above the manna, which was but a shadow of so great a blessing. Their fathers had eaten manna in the wilderness, and most of them had there died, without entering into the promised land, and the rest of them had lived but a short time afterwards; so that the advantage of that food was very small, save to those who saw in it the type of good things to come. But the true living Bread, which came down from heaven, is of so excellent a nature, that the man who feedeth on it shall never die; his soul will be nourished by it to everlasting life; and the death of the body will be only a sleep, which will shortly terminate in a glorious resurrection. And this Bread is no other than the flesh of Christ, his human nature, which he had assumed into personal union with his Deity, that he might present it to the Father as an expiatory

241. vii. 10—43.
 18. 16. R. 19.
 3. 14. 4. 10. 11.
 Acts. xvii. 32.
 1 Cor. ii. 14.
 b. 47. See on.
 iii. 3. Mat. v. 18.
 c. iii. 3. 5. xii. 8.
 xiv. 4. Matt.
 xxv. 2. Luke.
 xiii. 3. 5.
 d. 55. 1. 16. Matt.
 xxvii. 26—28.
 John v. 12. John.
 ii. 17.
 c. iv. 11. Pa. xxii.
 26. Psal. ix. 4—8.
 6. 18. xxv. 6—8.
 1. v. 1. 3. Gal.
 1. 20. Ph. ii. 7—9.
 f. See on. 39. 40. 47.
 g. 22. 1. 9. 47. viii.
 1. 36. xxv. 1.
 Heb. xii. 2. 1 John v. 20.

52 The Jews therefore ^a strove among themselves, saying, ^b How can this man give us *his* flesh to eat?

53 Then Jesus said unto them, ^b Verily, verily, I say unto you, ^c Except ye ^d eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

54 Who so ^e eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, ^f hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

55 For my flesh is ^g meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, ^h dwelleth in me, and I in him.

57 As ⁱ the living Father hath sent me, and ^j I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, ^k even he shall live by me.

58 This is ^m that Bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this Bread shall live for ever.

b. xiv. 20. 23. xx. 21.
 c. 23. Pa. xc. 1.
 xci. 1. 9. 2 Cor.
 vi. 16. Eph. iii.
 17. 1 John iii.
 24. iv. 12. 13.
 16. Rev. iii. 20.
 1. Pa. xxviii. 46.
 Jer. x. 10.
 1. Thim. i. 9.
 Heb. ix. 14.
 k. v. 26. xvi. 21.
 l. xi. 25. 26. xiv.
 c. 19. 2 Cor.
 xvi. 1. Gal. 4.
 20. Col. iii. 2, 4.
 1 John iv. 9.
 m. See on. 32. 34.
 41. 47—51.

sacrifice for the sins of the world; to purchase for sinners of every nation, who believe in him, all things pertaining to life and godliness. 'The Jews had insinuated, that feeding a few thousands with the five loaves was an inconsiderable thing, when compared with what Moses did, when he fed the whole camp of Israel: but our Lord here declares the purposes of his grace and bounty to be far more extensive, as reaching to the whole world, and giving life, immortal life, to all that should believe in him.' (Doddridge.) (Marg. Ref.)

V. 52—58. The Jews, who were generally ignorant, carnal, and formal, not understanding these declarations, began to dispute about them. Some took them in one sense, some in another; and probably many derided or censured Jesus, whilst others vindicated him: yet none of them could conceive how he could give them his flesh to eat. But he assured them in the most decisive manner, that "Except they ate his flesh and drank his blood, they had no life in them," but continued dead in sin and exposed to condemnation. It is here requisite to explain more fully the instruction conveyed by this figurative language. The human nature of "the Word who was made flesh," was doubtless intended: his flesh and blood were made meat and drink, when he gave his body to be wounded, and his blood to be shed on the cross, for our sins; and when his soul was made a sacrifice to the divine justice. The flesh and blood of Christ, as separated by death, procured salvation for sinners; and the expressions here employed refer to the intention, efficacy, and benefits of the sufferings of Christ. These are as needful to the life and health of our souls, as meat and drink are to the life and health of our bodies. The Lord, who, knowing our outward wants, hath provided food for our use, in compassion to our perishing misery as sinners, hath also appointed this nourishment for our souls. Our food does not sustain us by being prepared, but by being received, digested, and incorporated: so Christ doth not give life to our souls merely by dying for us, or by being exhibited in the Gospel; but as received through faith, digested in humble meditation, and converted into nutriment to hope, love, and other holy affections. The healthy man hungers and thirsts: nothing but meat and drink can satisfy his appetites; and, to obtain these, he will give any thing, or do any thing, which he finds absolutely necessary. Thus the regenerate soul hungers and thirsts for Christ and his salvation, and is prepared to venture, part with, or suffer any thing, rather than come short of an interest in him.—

A healthy man also relishes his meat and drink; and the lively Christian delights to feed on Christ, by receiving him for all the purposes of salvation. Though the food for the body is the gift of God, yet man must labour for it; and so must our spiritual food be laboured for, though it is given us by Christ. The believer feels weariness and uneasiness, and is ready to faint under trials and labours; but, attending on divine ordinances, and receiving Christ by renewed exercises of faith, as his daily meat and drink, he finds his spirits recruited, his heart encouraged, and his strength repaired, to run the race, endure the conflict, and perform the work appointed him. As the flesh and blood of Christ are expressly mentioned here, as well as in the institution of the Lord's supper, numbers have contended, that the external ordinance was intended; in the same way that *water-baptism* hath been mistaken for the *new birth of the Spirit*. But the Lord's supper was not at this time instituted: and can any one seriously think that every man "is dead in sin," till he has received that sacrament? Or that Christ dwells in, and will save, all those who partake of that ordinance, however hypocritically? No doubt it is the general duty of all real Christians frequently to commemorate the death of Christ at his table: but this is merely the outward sign of the blessing here intended; and they who rest in it will have only the shadow of salvation. It is also remarkable, that the Church which, of all others, has most exalted, and even idolized, the Lord's supper, has refused the cup, the emblem of the blood of Christ, to the laity; as if they would not let them have even the shadow of salvation!—We know, however, from Scripture, that the justice and holiness of God, and the honour of his violated law, rendered such a sacrifice as that of the death of Christ necessary for us: and unless a man feels his need of that atonement, and habitually lives on Christ for pardon, righteousness, and all things pertaining to salvation, "he hath no life in him." But he, who thus eats the flesh, and drinks the blood, of the Son of man, hath the title to eternal life, and the beginning of it: the resurrection of his soul to spiritual life is the pledge of the resurrection of his body to everlasting glory. For "the flesh of Christ is *meat indeed*," emphatically and exclusively, "and his blood is drink *indeed*;" inasmuch that when we thus live by faith in the atonement of Christ, and receive from his fulness, we dwell in him, as our Refuge, Rest, and Home; and he dwells in us by his grace and Spirit, as in his temple; so that we are one with him, and he with us.

n. 20. vii. 20. Ps.
10. 2. 10. Prov. 1.
20. 2. vi. 1.
2. Luke i. 1.
o. vi. 1.
P. 1. 2. vii. 43.
Mat. xiv. 1. Heb.
v. 11. 2. Pet. iii.
12.
Q. 61. 11. 23. 25.
xix. 17. Heb. ix.
13. 10. ii. 23.
7. iii. 13. xvi. 28.
xvii. 4. 5. 11.
Mark xvi. 19.
Luke xxi. 31.
Acts i. 9. Eph.
iv. 1. 1. Pet. i. 12.
22.
s. Gen. ii. 7. Rom.
vii. 2. 1. Cor. xv.
45. 2. 1. Cor. xiv.
40. 1. Gal. v. 22.
1. Pet. iii. 14.

59 These things said he ¹ in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

60 ¹ Many therefore ² of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, ³ This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

61 When Jesus ⁴ knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said ⁵ unto them, Doth this offend you?

62 What ⁶ and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

63 It is ⁷ the Spirit that quickeneth;

the flesh profiteth nothing: ⁸ the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.

64 But ⁹ there are some of you that believe not. ¹⁰ For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, ¹¹ That no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

This mystical union is so intimate, that it resembles that of the incarnate Son of God with the eternal Father: for as his life on earth was sustained by his union with the Deity, and by the indwelling of the Spirit; so believers are united to Christ, and live by that life which is hid in him, and they shall thus live for ever. (Notes, Col. iii. 3-3.) 'Whosoever eateth the flesh, and drinketh the blood of Christ, in the sense here spoken of, "abideth" in Christ, and Christ in him;' and therefore is a true and living member of Christ's body; and he shall have eternal life, and be partaker of a happy resurrection: and so no person can either be wicked here, or deprived of everlasting life hereafter, who, in the sense here mentioned, eats of the flesh and drinks of the blood of Christ. Now this is very true of eating spiritually and by faith, as it imports believing in Christ. "For this," saith Christ, "is the will of him that sent me, that every one who believeth in the Son hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." But then, of sacramental eating of Christ's flesh, it is as false: for this was eaten by a Judas, and continually is eaten by millions, who are both wicked here, and will be damned hereafter.' (Whitby.) It is, however, clear, that our Lord had some reference to that sacred ordinance, which he intended to appoint as the memorial of his body broken, and his blood shed, for the life of our souls, and as the outward sign of the manner in which we feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving; as a public profession of our inwardly receiving his atonement, and as a pledge to all true believers of everlasting life. They who suppose that our Lord meant merely the sacramental 'eating of his flesh and blood,' whether they graft on this construction Transubstantiation, Consubstantiation, or any blessing inseparably connected with the act of receiving, independent of the faith or unbelief of the receiver, doubtless pervert the words of Christ, to establish idolatry, superstition, formality, and self-righteousness. But such as speak of 'spiritually feeding on his words and doctrine,' without explicit reference to "faith in his blood," and, "feeding on him by faith in our hearts," &c. lead men, by another road, from this grand and central part of Christianity. They do not sufficiently consider Christ as a High-Priest and a propitiatory Sacrifice; and they too much confound him with other prophets, on whose doctrine men might feed, but who did not "give their flesh for the life of the world," or call on their hearers to "eat their flesh" and drink their blood," as essential to salvation, and as infallibly ensuring it.

V. 59. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 60-65. It is not wonderful, that this discourse should astonish our Lord's audience; for though instruction had frequently been spoken of, as *the food of the soul*, yet no prophet or servant of God, from the beginning of the world, had spoken of himself as the "Bread of Life;" and Jesus evidently assumed to himself more than Moses, or any other person, ever did or could properly have done. He spake also on the most mysterious doctrines and the most experimental part of religion, with which few of them were acquainted, and which militated against their strongest prejudices: therefore many, who had hitherto professed themselves his disciples, concluded that it was *a hard saying*, unintelligible or incredible; and inquired, who could endure to hear and receive it, as of divine authority? But Jesus, by his intimate knowledge of their secret thoughts and conversation, was acquainted with their murmurs; and demanded whether his doctrine stumbled them, and induced them to forsake him? If this now so perplexed them, what would they think of it, if they should "see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" The human nature of Christ had not before been in heaven; but, being God and man in one mysterious Person, that Person was called either the Son of God, or the Son of man, without exact discrimination; and in virtue of this indissoluble union, the Person called the Son of man might be said to have come down from heaven. (Marg. Ref.) This implied, that the Messiah's kingdom was not of this world; for he would at length ascend into heaven, and appear no more personally among them. They were not therefore to understand what he had said concerning "eating his flesh, and drinking his blood," in a gross, carnal sense, but of spiritually living on him and his fulness by faith: for as the soul of man giveth life to the body, without which the flesh is only a lifeless, putrifying lump of clay, so, without the quickening Spirit of God, all forms of religion are dead and worthless. Indeed, the words which Jesus spake to them were *spirit and life*: they related to spiritual things, on which the life of their souls depended; by believing his doctrine, trusting his promises, and meditating on his instructions, they would spiritually "eat his flesh and drink his blood;" and these were *the means* by which the Spirit of God would nourish their souls unto eternal life. But he spake these things unto them in this figurative manner, because some of them did not believe, and were disposed to make a bad use of his instructions; and therefore he had declared, for their warning, that none could come to him, except it

Rom ii. 25. iii.
1. 2. 1. Cor. xi.
17. 29. Gal. v.
6. vi. 15. 1. Tim.
6. 16. Heb. xiii.
9. 1. Pet. iii. 21.
6. 16. xii. 49. 50.
1. Pet. xxi. 17.
1. Cor. xiii. 7-9.
1. Cor. xiii. 120.
Rom x. 1-16. 17.
1. Cor. ii. 9-14. 12.
1. Cor. i. 6-8. 1.
1. Thes. ii. 13. Heb.
iv. 12. Jam. i. 18.
1. Pet. 25.
x. 36. xi. v. 12. vii.
23. 38. 17. 25. x.
26. xiii. 10. 16-21.
v. 71. 72. ii. 24.
1. 5. P. ex. xix.
1. Eph. ii. 8.
9. Phil. i. 29. 1. Tim. i. 14. 2. Tim. ii. 25. Tit. iii. 3-7. Heb. xii. 2. Jam. i. 16-18.

a 60. viii. 31.
Matt. xii. 43—
45 xiii. 20, 21.
xix. 22 xxi. 11—
11. xxviii. 20—
25 Luke ix. 62.
2 Tim. i. 15 1c.
10. Heb. x. 39.
39 2 Pet. ii. 20—
21 John ii. 19
b Josh. xxiv. 15—
29 Ruth i. 11—
18. 2 Sam. xv.
19. 20. Luke
xx. 23—33.
c Ps. lxxviii. 25.
d 40. 63. v. 21, 39, 40. Acts iv. 12 v. 20. 1 John v. 11—13 — e i. 31. 45—49 xi. 27. xx.
32. 31. Matt. xvi. 16. Mark i. i. viii. 29. Luke ix. 20. Acts viii. 37. Rom i. 3. 1. 1 John
v. 1. 20.

66 From that *time* many ^a of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him,
67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve,
^b Will ye also go away?
68 Then Simon Peter answered him,
Lord, ^c to whom shall we go? ^d thou hast the words of eternal life.

69 And ^e we believe and are sure that

thou art that Christ, the Son of ^f the living God.

70 Jesus answered them, ^g Have not I chosen you twelve, ^h and one of you is ⁱ a devil?

71 He spake of Judas Iscariot, *the son of Simon*: ^j for he it was that should betray him, ^k being one of the twelve.

c See on. 57.
e 64. xiii. 18. xvii.
12. Matt. x. 1—
4. Luke vi. 13—
16 Acts i. 17.
h viii. 41 xxi. 2.
i 27. Acts xxi.
10. 1 John 6.
Rev. ii. 10.
j 1 Tim. iii. 11
k Tit. ii. 3 16.
l 28. civ. 6—9.
Acts i. 16—20.
m 23 Jude 1.
xviii. 2—4. Ps.
xlii. 19. 13. 1.
Matt. xxvi. 14—
16 xxviii. 2—5.

were given him of his Father. "To be drawn by the "Father," (44.) and to have "faith given by the Father," are synonymous terms, which plainly indicates the interpretation above given.' (*Doddridge.*) "My words are "spirit and life; as being the means of obtaining the "Spirit, and by him this life; to which effects my flesh, if you could eat it, would profit you nothing. Had our "Lord said, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh "profiteth nothing;" "therefore the flesh, which I will "give, shall be joined to my divinity, and by the virtue of "it give you life;" 'he had said something like the sense "which others put on the text;" (namely, the defenders of transubstantiation, and many protestant expositors, who seem rather to lean towards that monstrous opinion!) 'But "saying only, "The words which I speak to you, they "are spirit;" "we cannot doubt, but he speaks of eating "and of drinking his flesh and blood spiritually.' (*Whitby.*)

V. 66—71. These professed disciples, who forsook Jesus on this occasion, attended no more on him during his life-time; but some of them might, after his ascension, when the event had explained his meaning, receive the instructions of his apostles. The multitudes, however, were at this time dispersed; 'seeing he was not such a "Messias as they looked for; and would not be content "with any kind of following him.' (*Hammond.*) And Christ, having only his twelve disciples with him, demanded of them, "Whether they would go away also?" intimating that he would have no unwilling followers. They too were in many things greatly prejudiced and mistaken, and especially they were strangers to the real nature of salvation, by his atoning sacrifice and faith in his blood; but in general they were teachable, upright believers. Peter, therefore, answering in the name of his brethren, inquired to whom they should go, in case they left him? John, their former master, had directed them to *him*; they could get no benefit by becoming the disciples of the Pharisees; they knew no other, who could be regarded even as a divine teacher; and they could by no means think of giving up the hope of eternal life, which they were engaged in the pursuit of as their first object, whatever temporal advantages they might also expect by following him: and indeed they believed, and had been fully assured, that he was the promised Messiah, the Son of the one true and living God; and that eternal life could only be found by believing and obeying his words, and observing his instructions. (*Note, Matt. xvi. 16, 17.*) To this bold and explicit confession, Jesus replied in a manner apparently very abrupt; observing, that one of the twelve whom he had chosen to be his apostles was a devil. He meant Judas Iscariot, who was a secret enemy, a designing

hypocrite, and one who was in every thing of a diabolical disposition, though he had not been suspected by the other apostles: especially he was a spy, and would prove a traitor, a liar, and a murderer, like Satan the accuser of the brethren. (*Marg. Ref.*) Thus Peter and the rest of them were taught to be upon their guard, and to answer for themselves alone; they were reminded, whilst they thought they stood, to take heed lest they should fall; and Judas was given to understand that his character was well known to his Lord. Probably he took no notice of it; and the other apostles would not be able to understand it, till the event explained it, to their great astonishment.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—21.

The beneficence of our Lord's miracles concurred with the power of them, to convince the people that he was from God; and the same spirit of love displayed in our conduct even amidst weakness and poverty, will best adorn the Gospel, evince its divine origin and excellency, and conciliate the minds of men. If we copy the example of our Lord, in rendering hearty thanks to the Giver of all our temporal comforts, and in dispensing them liberally to the indigent; our most frugal and homely meals will be far more comfortable and blessed, than the most luxurious feasts of ungodly men. But moderation and indifference in respect of our own diet, and a parsimonious care to "gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost," form the very basis of Christian beneficence: and if in opulent cities, all that which is wasted or needlessly consumed, were reserved to feed the hungry, how much more comfortably would the poor be maintained! and how much better would it be for the souls and bodies of the rich! Christians, however, at least should be willing to fare as Christ did; to obey his commands, and to encounter difficulties at his word. When he is not sensibly present, he is pleading for them; and he will come to them through every intervening obstacle; and by his power and love terminate all their sorrows, fears, and hardships.

V. 22—29.

If Jesus were again to appear on earth, feeding and healing men by miracle, he would again be followed by admiring multitudes, who might desire to have him for their King, in hopes of preferment and secular advantages: and indeed many profess his truths, attend on his ordinances, and minister in holy things, who seek nothing

CHAP. VII.

Jesus, when counselled by his unbelieving brethren to show himself at Jerusalem, at the feast of tabernacles, refuses to accompany them; but afterwards goes up privately, 1—10. The Jews seek him, and form different opinions of him, 11—13. He teaches in the temple; declares that his doctrine is of God, and answers objections, 14—29. Some seek to take him; others believe; and the Pharisees send officers to apprehend him,

30—32. He foretells his departure to the Father, when the Jews would in vain seek him, 33—36. He invites the thirsty to come to him and drink; referring to the Holy Spirit, which would be given to believers, 37—39. Divers opinions of him, 40—44. The officers, struck with his discourse, return without him, 45, 46. The Pharisees scornfully reproach them, and the common people, and Nicodemus who took his part, 47—52. They are disconcerted, and separate, 53.

more than "the loaves and fishes." They call him Rabbi, but will not be taught by him; they speak of him as their Saviour, but they do not rely on him for salvation; they say, "Lord, Lord, but will not do the things which he says." And though he exhorts all men "not to labour for the meat that perisheth; but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life," yet most even of those who profess and call themselves Christians, labour incessantly, anxiously, and wholly, for perishing vanities, till death convinces them of their folly; and then others succeed them, and copy the example of their infatuation! But to rational creatures, possessed of immortal souls, nothing is worthy of the chief regard, or to be the object of primary diligence, which will not endure unto everlasting life, and secure the possessor from final misery and despair. This enduring portion, the Son of man is authorized to bestow on whom he pleases: let us then direct all our earnestness, and employ all our labour, to secure the one thing needful; let us assiduously use every means, perform every duty, oppose every temptation, and seek the mortification of every sinful propensity; and in this way, let us "wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Whilst we daily inquire, what are the works of God, which we are called to perform, let us remember, that an habitual exercise of faith in Christ is the most important, indispensable, and arduous part of the obedience required of us, as sinners seeking salvation. When by his grace we are enabled to "live this life of faith in the Son of God," all other holy tempers follow, and all acceptable services may be performed; but without this no boasted services will be regarded by our holy and merciful God. Yet this command, (difficult as it is to a proud and carnal heart,) only calls on a man who is poor, and deeply in debt, to come, that he may be enriched; a malefactor, to accept of pardon and preferment; and a starving wretch, to partake of a sumptuous feast!

V. 30—35.

Blessed be our God, that he hath given us "the true Bread from heaven!" May he create in us an appetite for it; that we may *intelligently and cordially* say, "Lord, evermore give us this Bread!" But when we look around us, we see men in general hungering after, and feeding on, husks or ashes: they "spend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth

"not." Some feed on airy speculations, and "philosophy, falsely so called;" some aim to satisfy their minds with gold, with fame, or power; some feed grossly on sensual pleasure; and numbers attempt to allay their cravings after happiness by dissipated mirth, or the pride of life. All these are like "a hungry man, who dreameth that he eateth, but he awaketh, and his soul is empty;" for at length death comes, and their unsatisfied desires prove their eternal tormentors. Nay many, pretending to religion, take pleasure in superstition, enthusiasm, notions, forms, controversies, or revellings: these also "feed upon ashes;" "a deceived heart hath turned them aside, that they cannot deliver their souls, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand?" But "the flesh of Christ is Meat indeed, and his blood is Drink indeed;" here the soul that hungers and thirsts for God, for righteousness, and true felicity, and that is made sensible of its state and wants, finds a suitable and abundant provision. Here pardon, peace, hope, communion with God, and whatever can calm the conscience, serene and cheer the heart, or promote true holiness, is comprised in one glorious Object, a mighty Redeemer, "God manifest in the flesh," shedding his precious blood to atone for the sins of his rebellious creatures! This is that "living Bread, which came down from heaven, that we might eat and live for ever."

V. 36—46.

Unhumbled sinners cannot understand spiritual things; and therefore they either object and deride, or they rest in outward forms, instead of the power of godliness. He alone who made the provision for our souls can effectually teach these mysteries, and draw us unto Christ, that we may live by faith in him. All that the Father giveth to the Son will be thus taught, and will come to him; and he will surely receive and keep them, and will raise them up at the last day. When, therefore, sinners are convinced of their need of Christ, and that they cannot truly believe in him, except by the teaching and drawing of the Father; let them attend to his word and pray for his Spirit, and in this way expect his blessing on their souls. For every one, who willingly comes to Christ, will be made welcome; and will, on no account whatever, be cast out. He hath spoken the word, and he will make it good; it is his will, and the will of the Father that sent him, and it cannot be invalidated. Let convinced sinners then apply

37. A. D. 32.
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 98. A. D. 32.
 99. A. D. 32.
 100. A. D. 32.

AFTER these things Jesus ^a walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, ^b because the Jews sought to kill him.

2 Now the Jews' ^c feast of tabernacles was at hand.

3 His ^d brethren therefore said unto him, ^e Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.

4 For ^f there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly: if thou do these things, ^g shew thyself to the world.

5 For ^h neither did his brethren believe in him.

6 Then Jesus said unto them, ⁱ My time is not yet come; but your time is always ready.

7 The ^j world cannot hate you; ^k but

with confidence; "let the hearts of them rejoice who seek the Lord;" let them be thankful that they have discovered their danger and their remedy; and let them seek further instruction, that they may enjoy the comfort, and bring forth the fruits, of a life of faith in the incarnate Son of God.

V. 47—59.

Though the Jews could not, yet we may, know how Jesus can give us his flesh to eat; the humble believer can rest in no outward emblem; but, through the sacramental bread and wine, he sees the body and blood of Christ, as truly appropriated by the faith of all acceptable communicants for every saving purpose. He is convinced, that, except he eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, he hath no spiritual life in him, nor any good hope of eternal life; and therefore his great fear is, lest he should be deceived in a matter of such vast importance. He is often ready to faint and be weary, through inward conflicts and outward troubles; but by again receiving Christ, as the Life and Salvation of his soul, he finds his hopes revive, his fears vanish, his strength return, and his graces invigorated; and thus he feeds daily on Christ, and proceeds in his work and warfare with patient alacrity. He finds that meditation on the cross of Christ, and all the glorious truths connected with it, give life to his repentance, love, and gratitude; his heart is thus raised above, weaned from the world, and fixed on heavenly things; he is enabled to rejoice in the Lord; he dwells in Christ, and Christ in him, and he learns to live by, and to, his beloved Saviour, in some measure, as He lived by the Father that sent him, and to his glory. This is the Christian's life: in proportion as he thus lives upon Christ, and thirsts and applies for the blessings purchased by his precious blood, he copies more closely his example, and obeys his commandments.

V. 60—71.

Many, who are called disciples, will dispute against the words of Christ; many will attend to the general doctrines of the Gospel; but when ministers apply them to their consciences and experience, they are ready to exclaim, "It is a hard saying, who can hear it?" They form gross conceptions of spiritual things, and dispute against their own misrepresentations: so that those preachers, who imitate their Master, need not wonder if their faithful doctrine drives away numbers, who for a time seemed zealously attached to them. We must, however, speak the words of Christ, "which are spirit and life," and not like the

dead notions of moralists and speculators; and we must leave it to him, to quicken whom he will by his Spirit, and to determine who are, and who are not, true believers. Our main business is with ourselves: when many turn back, and walk no more with Christ; he seems to say to us, "Will ye go away also?" But the truly broken-hearted sinner, who can rest satisfied with nothing short of eternal life, will answer, "Lord, to whom shall I go?" Even when discouraged, tempted, and harassed with doubts and fears, he still knows it is vain to think of returning to the world, of seeking salvation by the works of the law, of resting in forms and notions, or of going after false teachers; and still he believes, and desires to be fully assured, that Jesus hath the words of eternal life, as "the Christ, the Son of the living God." This faith, in its feeblest exercise, is essentially different from that of the most specious hypocrite, who ever followed the steps of the traitor Judas: such are often near to Christ in external profession and office, yet like Satan in the temper of their hearts and secret conduct; but they are known, and will be detected, by the heart-searching Judge, however they may impose upon their brethren. May we then be now searched and proved by him; and may our hearts be made sound in his statutes, as those whom he hath "chosen unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and the belief of the truth."

NOTES.

CHAP. VII. V. 1. For a considerable time our Lord went about Galilee, preaching the Gospel; but he would not go into Judea to teach, because he knew that the rulers were determined to put him to death. He did not see good at that time to expose himself to their rage; or to favour such virulent enemies with his miracles and instructions. It may be supposed, that he attended the passover, and other appointed feasts; but he went privately, and continued only a short time at Jerusalem, or in the neighbourhood. The term, *walked*, implies, that he did not continue in the same place, but went from one town or village to another, teaching and healing. Our Lord was descended from Judah, and therefore a Jew, or Judean, in the strict and literal sense of the word; yet his ministry was more favourably attended, in the remote parts of the land, where many of the inhabitants belonged to other tribes, than in Judea, which was chiefly occupied by the tribe of Judah. In this sense, likewise, "He came to his own, and his own received him not."

V. 2. Notes, &c. Lev. xxiii. 39—42. Num. xxix: 24—40.)

m 1 Kings xi. 20
 7.8. 12. 13.
 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.
 8. 9. 10. 11. 12.
 13. 14. 15. 16.
 17. 18. 19. 20.
 21. 22. 23. 24.
 25. 26. 27. 28.
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 33. 34. 35. 36.
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 89. 90. 91. 92.
 93. 94. 95. 96.
 97. 98. 99. 100.

me it hateth, "because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

8 Go ye up unto this feast : " I go not up yet unto this feast ; for my time is not yet full come.

9 When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee.

10 But when his brethren were gone up, " then went he also up unto the feast, " not openly, but as it were in secret.

11 Then " the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he ?

12 And there was much " murmuring among the people concerning him : for " some said, He " is a good man : others said, Nay ; but he " deceiveth the people.

13 Howbeit, no man " spake openly of him, for fear of the Jews.

14 ¶ Now about " the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into " the temple, and taught.

15 And the Jews " marvelled, saying, " z. v. 14. vii. 2. xviii. 20. Hag. ii. 7-9. Mal. iii. 1. Matt. xxi. 12. Luke xiv. 47. Matt. viii. 28. xxi. 22. 33. Luke ii. 47.

V. 3—10. Perhaps these brethren, or kinsmen, of our Lord, were disgusted, because they saw no prospect of secular advantage from their relation to him, which they had expected, in case he was the promised Messiah ; and, therefore, notwithstanding his miracles, and the holiness of his character and doctrine, they suspected that he was a deceiver, and supposed that he acted from corrupt motives. They pretended friendship, when they advised him to go into Judea, to preach and work miracles among the rich and learned part of the nation : they intimated that he must have many disciples there, who would thus be encouraged openly to espouse his cause ; and that the numbers of his adherents being increased, he might then proceed to assert his claim to the kingdom of the Messiah. They urged, that it was absurd, and contrary to all ordinary rules of policy, for him to continue in that obscure part of the country, when his object must be to make himself known ; and they concluded, that if he meant to proceed, he ought to stand forth openly, and show himself to the world. By this insidious counsel, they probably meant to lead him into danger, desiring that the Scribes and Pharisees might examine his pretensions ; at least they were actuated by merely carnal motives. He, therefore, told them, that his time for going up to the feast, or of avowing himself amidst his enemies, was not yet arrived ; but that their time was always ready ; and they might go up to Jerusalem with safety whenever they chose. The world could have no enmity against them ; as their maxims, principles, and conduct, were congenial with those of other ungodly men, and served to keep them in countenance ; but all sorts of unconverted sinners must needs hate him, because he testified of them that their works were evil. He not only exposed the heinousness of men's evident immoralities and impieties, but he detected the pride and hypocrisy of the austere and superstitious Scribes and Pharisees : he testified even against their supposed good works, that they sprang from a corrupt source, and were abominations in the sight of God ; and he showed, that men of all nations, sects, and external characters, were deserving of God's wrath and abhorrence, for the wickedness of their hearts and lives. These things affronted the pride, disquieted the consciences, interfered with the pursuits, and excited the indignation of the world in general ; thus he was mortally hated by them, notwithstanding the perfection of his character, and the power of his miracles ; and the same effects will always be produced by the same course. It is probable, that these brethren of Christ went

up, with many others, some days before the feast : he had his reasons for not going with them, as his time was not yet fully come. He, perhaps, knew that his enemies would have taken umbrage, if he had gone up with a multitude of attendants ; therefore he chose to go privately, and only just before the feast began. 'It is not to be doubted, but that Jesus arrived in time, in order to observe that feast of seven days most accurately, and indeed without omitting so much as one tittle of the law ;'—'as bound, for the sake of his people, to keep the whole law most perfectly. Yet for the same cause,' (that above assigned,) 'he did not openly enter the temple till the middle of the feast ; that he might, in his Father's house, perform the office committed to him by his Father.' (Beza.) Attendance on the sacred festivals was a part of the obedience which the law required, to which our Lord willingly subjected himself ; and this he perfectly obeyed. But this attendance also gave him the opportunity of teaching vast multitudes, and confirming his doctrine by miracles before them. Yet, in availing himself of these opportunities, a wise regard to circumstances was, in all respects, highly important. There is reason to conclude these brethren of our Lord afterwards became his disciples. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 11—13. As the Jews sought our Lord, it may be supposed, that he constantly attended on the three great feasts, though we have not a particular account of it. Some of the people concluded, from his doctrine and miracles, that he must be a good and holy man ; but others would not allow him even this inferior honour, concluding that he imposed on the people by some artifice, which they were not able to detect ; and they who favoured him dared not openly to avow their sentiments, lest the rulers should censure or excommunicate them. Perhaps the Galileans might also fear, lest the Jews should inform against them. 'They that thought contemptibly of Christ might have spoken their minds as freely as they pleased.' (Dodridge.) This has often been the case ; and still is in very many places, even where Christianity is professed. 'An example of horrible confusion in the very bosom of the Church ! The pastors keep the people under oppression by fear and terror ; the people seek Christ when he does not appear, and neglect him when he offereth himself to them. Some, that know, rashly condemn him ; and very few think rightly of him, and that in secret.' (Beza.) It may be added, that of those who favoured him, very few indeed had just views of his person, salvation, and kingdom.

10. 11.
 6 Ps. ix. 9, 10.
 Jer. 15, 17.
 Prov. xxviii. 1.
 Is. xlii. 4, 7.
 Matt. xxi. 16.
 Acts. ix. 13. Eph.
 vi. 19. 10. Phil. i.
 14. 2 Tim. i. 7. 8.
 4. 16. 22. xi. 47.
 — 53. xii. 42.
 Luke. vi. 30.
 1. 15. 42. Matt.
 xxi. 31. — 57.
 Mark. i. 2.
 Luke. iv. 22.
 5. 31. 42. & xi. 1.
 Phil. Jer. xlii. 1.
 5. xxv. 21. Mic.
 vi. 2. Matt. vi. 5.
 6. Acts. viii. 31.
 9. 1. 46. viii. 14.
 Matt. ii. 23.
 Luke. ii. 4. 11.
 29. 51.
 2. iii. 25. 42. 11.
 16. 42. x. 36.
 xii. 49. xiii. 10.
 31.
 419. 33. v. 50.
 419. 25. 2 Cor.
 i. 18. Tit. i. 2.
 Heb. xi. 13.
 1. John. v. 10.
 15. 19. 54.
 55. xvi. 3. xvii. 3. 25. 1. Sam. ii. 12. Ps. ix. 10. Prov. ii. 3-5. Jer. ix. 6. xxxi. 34. Hos.
 iv. 1. v. 4. vi. 3-6. Matt. xi. 27. Luke. x. 22. Acts. xvii. 24. Rom. i. 29. 2 Cor. iv. 6. 1.
 3. John. i. 3. 4. — 1. 10. viii. 55. x. 15. xvi. 25. 26. — d. iii. 16. 17. xxi. 3. xvi.
 27. 20. xvii. 18. 1. John. i. 2. iv. 9. 11. — e. 19. 32. viii. 57. 59. x. 31. 39. xi. 57. Luke
 xiii. 47. 48. xx. 19.

25 Then said some of them ^a of Jerusalem, ^r Is not this he whom they seek to kill?

26 But, lo, ^a he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. ^t Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?

27 Howbeit, ^u we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, ^x no man knoweth whence he is.

28 Then cried Jesus in the temple, as he taught, saying, ^y Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am; ^z and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me ^a is true, ^b whom ye know not.

29 But ^c I know him: ^d for I am from him, and he hath sent me.

30 Then ^e they sought to take him:

power and goodness displayed in it, as because he did it on the sabbath-day, and ordered the man to carry his bed in evidence of his cure. But in respect of that argument, they should observe, that Moses had enjoined them the law of circumcision; (though it had been practised long before his time by their fathers;) yet they could not observe that law, without deviating from the exact rest which they supposed to be required on the sabbath; for when the eighth day happened on the sabbath, they used to circumcise the male child, that they might not defer that ordinance beyond the time; nor did they deem this labour a violation of the holy rest. But if this were right, why should they blame him for restoring a man, diseased in every part of his body, on that day to perfect soundness by a word speaking? Surely the law of love was as binding as that of circumcision! and it was as consistent with the design of the sabbath, to restore health to the afflicted, as to administer an external rite! He therefore demanded of them not to judge by their partial prejudices, or by his external appearance; But to decide on his conduct in an equitable manner, according to the spiritual-import of the divine law. Circumcision was at first given to Abraham, as “the seal of the righteousness of faith,” and of the covenant made with him in Christ: though it was afterwards made a part of the ceremonial law. (Notes, Gen. xvii.) Our Lord seems here to have referred to this circumstance, which the Jews generally overlooked, and thus confounded together the Sinai-covenant and that made with Abraham. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 25—30. Whilst this subject was under consideration, some of the citizens, who were acquainted with the designs of the council, (of which they who came from other places were ignorant,) inquired, Whether this were not the person whom the rulers had resolved to put to death as a deceiver? and they were astonished, that he was allowed to speak in so open a manner, and met with no interruption. Was it possible, that the rulers should at length be persuaded that he was indeed the promised Messiah?

but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.

31 And many of the people ^a believed on him, and said, ^b When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which ^c this man hath done?

32 The ^d Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests ^e sent officers to take him.

33 Then said Jesus unto them, ^f Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me.

34 Ye ^g shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, ^h thither ye cannot come.

35 Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto ⁱ the

They knew him to be an inhabitant of Nazareth, the Son of Mary, the wife of Joseph: but when the Messiah came, no man would know whence he was. Doubtless they were ignorant of our Lord's descent from David, of his miraculous conception, and of his nativity at Bethlehem; and they rashly concluded, that his parentage and birth did not answer to those predicted of the Messiah: yet they seem to have had some confused idea of the divine original of that great Redeemer; and thence they concluded, that when he came, no man would know whence he was. Had their prejudices allowed them to examine, they would have found their objection sufficiently answered by the circumstances of our Lord's nativity. Some think, that the Messiah's birth of a virgin was referred to; and others, that a tradition of the Jews, that the Messiah, when he came, would for a long time be hidden, was meant; but it is more probable, that an erroneous construction of some prophecies, which related to his eternal Deity, had drawn away their minds from the plainer and more express predictions on the subject. (Marg. Ref.)—Our Lord, however, knowing this, proclaimed aloud, in reproof of their obstinate and ignorant opposition, that they indeed vainly imagined that they both knew him and his original, and were sure that he was not the Messiah. Yet he was not come of himself, but was sent by God, who testified of him, and showed himself true to his promises and prophecies: for though they pretended to be worshippers of God, they did not know his perfections and the glory of them, and had no spiritual or experimental acquaintance with him. But he perfectly and intimately knew him, being sent by the Father to make him known to men. This declaration, that they knew not God, joined to his claim of such a knowledge of him as was peculiar to himself, exasperated the hearers so much, that they sought an opportunity to apprehend him; but as his hour was not yet come, they were supernaturally restrained from touching him.

* Or *Græce*, dispersed among the * Gentiles, * and teach the Gentiles?

36 What ¹ manner of saying is this that he said, "Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me? and, Where I am, thither ye cannot come?"

37 ¶ In ¹ the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39 (But ¹ this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

V. 31—36. The discourses of Jesus convinced many of the people that he was the Messiah; and they secretly inquired whether that great Deliverer could work greater miracles than he did? But some spies carried the report of these things to the Pharisees, who were the more exasperated, as they saw that their reputation, authority, and interest, must be ruined, if the people received him in this character. Assembling therefore the council, they sent officers to take him, and bring him before them in the chamber of the temple, where they were convened. When the officers were come, Jesus observed to them, that he should continue with them a little longer, notwithstanding their designs against him; but that he would shortly return to the Father that had sent him. Then they might seek him, some of them from malice, and others from a vain desire of help in their extreme distress; but they would not find him, nor would they ever be able to enter that happy place whither he was going. This referred to the calamities which were coming on the Jewish nation for their enmity to Jesus, and to their vain waiting and seeking for the promised Messiah to rescue them. But they could not understand whither he meant to go, having no idea of his ascension into heaven: they therefore inquired whether he intended to go among the Jews, who were living in other nations; and in case they would not receive him as the Messiah, to become a Teacher of the idolatrous Gentiles themselves? This they would consider as the most despicable and disgraceful employment imaginable. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 37—39. As the officers who came to take Jesus returned afterwards, it must have been on this day that they were sent to take him. On the last day of the feast of tabernacles there was a holy convocation; and it is recorded that the people used to draw and pour out water before the Lord. In allusion, as it is supposed, to this ceremony, Jesus stood forth in a conspicuous situation, and proclaimed aloud, "If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink." Thus he declared himself to be the unfailling Source of salvation to perishing sinners; yea, "the Fountain of living waters," in opposition to the broken cisterns of mere creatures; and in fact spake as the all-sufficient God. (*Marg. Ref.*) If any man felt him-

self destitute, exposed to misery, and desirous of true happiness, let him come to him, and his wants would be supplied, his distress prevented, his desires satisfied: if any sinner were disquieted with guilt, and fear of wrath, and experienced fervent desires after the favour of God, communion with him, and recovery to holiness, let him come to Jesus, and his terrors should be removed, and the blessings thirsted after be granted. But as this thirst especially means *vehement longing after spiritual blessings*, which nothing can divert or satisfy, except the enjoyment of them, so the sanctifying and comforting influences of the Holy Spirit were particularly intended. For he added, that every one, who believed in him, would be so replenished, that "out of his belly would flow rivers of living water." This was spoken in reference to several Scriptures. (*Marg. Ref.*) The believer would not only have these divine influences communicated to him for his own abiding advantage, but they would be within him a fountain of living water, whence plentiful streams, yea, rivers, would flow forth, for the quickening, sanctifying, and comforting of others also. This holy and fervent affection, as connected with divine knowledge and wisdom, would produce such a tenour of edifying conversation, and exemplary practice, and such an improvement of his talents, as would render him a channel, as it were, by which spiritual blessings would be conveyed to those with whom he associated. This might be especially intended of the apostles, and the preachers of the Gospel; but, in a subordinate sense, it is the case of all zealous Christians. The evangelist here notes, that our Lord spake this of the Spirit, which believers were afterwards to receive: "for the Holy Ghost was not yet; because Jesus was not yet glorified." "Holy men of old had in deed spoken as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" and all believers in every age had been sanctified and comforted by him: but the *ministration of the Spirit* was not at that time fully introduced; the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, either in his miraculous or his sanctifying, influences, had not yet taken place; for that signal event was reserved to grace the Redeemer's triumphs, and to attest his resurrection and ascension to heavenly glory. (*Notes.* Acts ii.)

40 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, "Of a truth this is the Prophet."

41 Others said, "This is the Christ; But some said, "Shall Christ come out of Galilee?"

42 Hath ¹ not the scripture said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Beth-lehem, where David was?

43 So ¹ there was a division among the people because of him.

self destitute, exposed to misery, and desirous of true happiness, let him come to him, and his wants would be supplied, his distress prevented, his desires satisfied: if any sinner were disquieted with guilt, and fear of wrath, and experienced fervent desires after the favour of God, communion with him, and recovery to holiness, let him come to Jesus, and his terrors should be removed, and the blessings thirsted after be granted. But as this thirst especially means *vehement longing after spiritual blessings*, which nothing can divert or satisfy, except the enjoyment of them, so the sanctifying and comforting influences of the Holy Spirit were particularly intended. For he added, that every one, who believed in him, would be so replenished, that "out of his belly would flow rivers of living water." This was spoken in reference to several Scriptures. (*Marg. Ref.*) The believer would not only have these divine influences communicated to him for his own abiding advantage, but they would be within him a fountain of living water, whence plentiful streams, yea, rivers, would flow forth, for the quickening, sanctifying, and comforting of others also. This holy and fervent affection, as connected with divine knowledge and wisdom, would produce such a tenour of edifying conversation, and exemplary practice, and such an improvement of his talents, as would render him a channel, as it were, by which spiritual blessings would be conveyed to those with whom he associated. This might be especially intended of the apostles, and the preachers of the Gospel; but, in a subordinate sense, it is the case of all zealous Christians. The evangelist here notes, that our Lord spake this of the Spirit, which believers were afterwards to receive: "for the Holy Ghost was not yet; because Jesus was not yet glorified." "Holy men of old had in deed spoken as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" and all believers in every age had been sanctified and comforted by him: but the *ministration of the Spirit* was not at that time fully introduced; the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, either in his miraculous or his sanctifying, influences, had not yet taken place; for that signal event was reserved to grace the Redeemer's triumphs, and to attest his resurrection and ascension to heavenly glory. (*Notes.* Acts ii.)

130. 41. viii 20
xxv. 5. 6. Acts
xviii. 10. xxvii.
11. xxviii. 25.

44 And some of them would have taken him; ¹ but no man laid hands on him.

132. Acts v. 21-27.

45 Then came ^k the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?

126. Matt. vii 29.

46 The officers answered, ¹ Never man spake like this man.

126. Matt. vii 29.
127. Luke iv. 22.
128. 12. ix. 27-34.
2 Kings xviii. 39.
32. Marg. 2 Chr.
xxviii. 15. Matt.
xxvii. 63. 2 Cor.
v. 9.

47 Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?

126. 20. xii. 42.
Mat. x. 25. Acts
vi. 7. 1 Cor. i. 22.
-29. ii. 8.

48 Have ^a any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him?

49 But ^a this people, who knoweth not the law are cursed.

131. 34. 40. 41.
12. xxvii. 19.
13. xxviii. 19.
13v. 5. 1 Cor. i.
2021. 1. 18. 20.
13. 11. 13. 18.
13. 11. 13. 18.
13. 11. 13. 18.

50 Nicodemus saith unto them, ^b (he that came ^{*} to Jesus by night, being one of them.)

13. 11. 13. 18.
13. 11. 13. 18.
13. 11. 13. 18.

51 Doth ^a our law judge *any* man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

13. 11. 13. 18.
13. 11. 13. 18.
13. 11. 13. 18.

52 They answered and said unto him, 'Art thou also of Galilee? ^a Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

13. 11. 13. 18.
13. 11. 13. 18.
13. 11. 13. 18.
13. 11. 13. 18.
13. 11. 13. 18.
13. 11. 13. 18.

53 And ^a every man went unto his own house.

V. 40—53. This open declaration of our Lord, and his other instructions, excited a fresh debate among the people concerning him; as some deemed him that Prophet who was to precede the Messiah, and others the promised Messiah himself. But to this it was objected, that Jesus was of Galilee; whereas the Messiah was to be a descendant of David, and a native of Bethlehem. Thus they remained under the power of prejudice, because they did not make diligent and impartial inquiry concerning him. Yet amid these disputes, even such of the officers as were disposed to apprehend him, could not summon resolution to do it; and so they returned to the council without him.—And being questioned concerning their conduct, they replied, that “never man spake as this Person did!” His discourses were imitatively powerful and convincing, and delivered with unspeakable dignity and propriety. This enraged the proud and envious Pharisees, who demanded, whether they too were deceived into an opinion of his being the Messiah? And, making their own example the test of truth, they inquired, whether any of the rulers, or even of the Pharisees, the most learned, eminent, and religious men in the nation, had believed in him? For as to the ignorant rabble, who followed him, they knew nothing of the meaning of the Scriptures, and were deserving to be despised and execrated of men, as well as accursed of God. To this Nicodemus ventured to reply, by inquiring whether their law judged and condemned any man unheard, and without examining him concerning the things of which he was accused? This implied a direct answer to their inquiry: here was a ruler, a teacher, and a Pharisee, who at least favoured Jesus. Accordingly they began to revile him, as if he had spoken like a contemptible Galilean, and required him to examine, and he would find that no prophet was to arise out of Galilee. This was a general rule, for which they had no ground; if they meant any thing more by it, than that the Messiah was not to be born in Galilee: for Jonah was a native of Gath-hepher, or Gittath-hepher, in Galilee. (Josh. xix. 13. 2 Kings xiv. 25.) Nicodemus’s interposition, however, disconcerted their measures, and they did not proceed any further in their design at that time.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—10.

No external evidences or advantages can overcome the

obstinacy and enmity of the human heart, or secure the sinner’s conversion: we need not then be disconcerted by the contempt and opposition of our nearest relations, when we remember that the brethren of the holy Jesus did not believe in him. Worldly men commonly judge of others by themselves: and so ascribe their most unexceptionable actions, however modestly and humbly performed, to ostentation, ambition or some selfish motives; knowing that their own most specious conduct springs from no higher principle: and they often gravely undertake to counsel those who are employed in the service of God: yet they can only propose to them such things, as *apparently* conduce to their present advantage, and *really* tend to their injury and disgrace. But the spiritual man sees a variety of reasons for his conduct, and for the time and manner of his proceedings, of which others have no capacity to judge. He knows himself to be surrounded with enemies, who hate him, in proportion as his example, conversation, or more public testimony, tends to expose the wickedness of men’s hearts and lives; to protest against the corrupt maxims, pursuits, and fashions of the world; and to show the evil even of their boasted morality, religion, and benevolence, when tarnished by pride, hypocrisy, and enmity to the Gospel. He sees therefore that he needs “the wisdom of the serpent, as well as the harmlessness of the dove:” he will consult the word of God, and pray for the teaching of his Spirit: he will be decided against carnal advice, and leave carnal counsellors to possess, unenvied, that “friendship of the world which is enmity against God.”

V. 11—18.

The servants of Christ must expect to follow him, “through evil report and good report.” The most faithful preachers of his Gospel must be content to be called, by many, “deceivers of the people;” though others will allow them to be good men: and perhaps think better of them than they deserve, which none ever could do of their Lord and Master. But, in general, they who count them deceivers, will speak out; and many who favour them will be afraid of incurring reproach by avowing their regard to them. Any plausible objection, the result of ignorance and indolent mistake, will often more than counterbalance the fullest proof of a man’s being employed and accepted by God; for the cause is tried before partial judges, who

CHAP. VIII.

Jesus teaches at the temple, 1, 2. The Pharisees lay a snare for him, in respect of a woman taken in adultery; but he turns it to their confusion, and warns the woman to sin no more, 3—11. He declares himself to be the Light of the world; justifies his doctrine, shows that his Father bare witness to him, and predicts the doom of unbelievers, 12—29. Many believe, whom he exhorts to continue in his word, promising them liberty

by the knowledge of the truth, 30—32. He refutes the cavils and detects the vain-confidence of his enemies; showing that they are the slaves of sin, and the children of the devil, 33—47. Being reviled as a Samaritan and possessed, he refutes the charge, promises life to believers, asserts his dignity, and adds, "Before Abraham was, I AM," 48—53. He miraculously rescues himself from those who attempted to stone him, 59.

will only hear the evidence on one side of the question. Some prejudice concerning the family, country, or education of the faithful teacher, will be employed by Satan, to stop the ears of his servants against the truth: and the charge of ignorant and illiterate will be adduced against the most Scriptural preachers, by such as have not yet learned "the first principles of the oracles of God," however accomplished they may be in that wisdom of the world, which is foolishness with him. But in an inferior sense, every faithful minister, (wherever educated,) may humbly adopt the words of Christ. His doctrine is not his own invention, nor does it spring either from his learning or his ignorance; but it is from God deduced from his word through the teaching of his Spirit, and he orders it to be preached for the glory of his name. All, therefore, who presume to engage in this work, should daily study and pray over the Scriptures, in order to possess a well grounded confidence, that the grand subjects of their instructions are agreeable to the oracles of God. They ought likewise to take heed to themselves, as well as to their doctrine; that thus they may always have the rejoicing in the testimony of their consciences, as not seeking their own glory, the applause of their hearers, or any filthy lucre, (as self-sent preachers do,) but the glory of God in the salvation of souls. Then it will appear, that there is no unrighteousness in them, nor any reason to suspect them of bad motives in the exercise of their ministry. But amidst the various opinions and controversies about religion, which agitate the world, what a blessed encouragement is it to the honest inquirer, to remember, that if any man of any nation "*will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether men speak of themselves!*" The word of the Lord is passed, and cannot be recalled; and all, who desire earnestly and seek diligently to know the will of God, in order to reduce it to practice, shall be guided through every labyrinth of uncertainty, and pass every precipice of error, into the ways of truth and peace; and they only shall be given up to strong and destructive delusions, who hate the truth because they have pleasure in unrighteousness.

V. 19—36.

Unbelievers may be very zealous for their own views of religion, and vehemently persecute those who dissent from them; whilst at the same time they are acting in direct opposition to the plain precepts of Scripture, and indulging

the most diabolical tempers: and when the least check is given them, they revile and abuse others, as if all not of their party were unworthy of the least regard. Such men, in their zeal for doctrines, (perhaps true in themselves, though held by them in a perverted manner,) entirely overlook the genuine tendency of them, and are full of pride and rage in disputing for the most humiliating and conciliatory truths. If external ordinances be their idol, they pervert them to purposes diametrically opposite to their true intention: and they condemn in others things of the same nature with, or undeniably better than, those which they allow in themselves. But it behooves us to consider matters more candidly and impartially; that we may "not judge according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment." We should also guard against the folly of opposing our preconceived opinions to such instructions as have the appearance of being from God. If we would understand religion, we must get acquainted with the glory and harmony of the divine perfections; and we must seek this knowledge of God from the incarnate Son, and by contemplating his character, miracles, life, and death: otherwise we shall set up a false system in opposition to the truth; and be in danger of being seduced to concur with those, who, in every age, have been enraged to persecution by the success of the Gospel. For a short time Christ continues, by his word and ministers, among those who reject his salvation: the day both of life and of grace is of transient and uncertain continuance; and afterwards sinners, in their misery, would be glad of that help which now they despise. But it will soon become in vain to seek him; and where he is, thither shall no unbeliever enter for ever. They may dispute, reason, and murmur about such sayings at present; but the event will explain them; and in the mean time he will continue to teach his people, who are dispersed throughout the nations.

V. 37—53.

Still the divine Redeemer proclaims aloud to every man that is athirst, to come to him and drink. Happy then is he whom nothing can satisfy except the favour, image, and enjoyment of God! Let him come unto Jesus, that this thirst may be allayed, and let him not fear a repulse. From our smitten Rock the waters of life flow forth abundantly, to follow the true Israelites through this barren wilderness. The miraculous operations of the Holy Spirit we do not now expect: but his more ordinary, and

a Matt. xxi. 1
Mark xxi. 1 xlii
3. Luko xix. 37.

b iv. 31. Ec ix.
10. Jer xxv. 3.
c xlv. 3. Luko
xxi. 37. 39.
d Matt. v. 1. 2
xxvi. 55. Luko
xx. 28. v. 9.

e 1 Cor. xx. 10.
Deut. xlii. 21.
20. Ec. vi. 1.
38-40 xxiii. 47.
f Mat. v. 17. xix.
6-8 xxii. 16-18.

g Num. xiv. 22.
Matt. xix. 3.
Luko x. 35.
xi. 53. 54. xx.
20. 23. 1 Cor.
20. 31. Gen. xlix. 9.
Jer. xvi. 13.
Dan. v. 6.
Ps. xxxviii. 12.
-14. xxxix. 1.
Prov. xxi. 17.
Ec. iii. 7. Am.
v. 10. 13. Matt.
x. 16. xv. 23.
xxvi. 63.

JESUS ^a went unto the mount of Olives.

2 And ^b early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him: ^c and he sat down, and taught them.

3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him ^a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

5 Now ^a Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: ^e but what sayest thou?

6 This they said, ^f tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. ^g But Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground, ^h as though he heard them not.

7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, ⁱ and said unto them, ^k He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

9 And they which heard *it*, ^l being convicted by their own conscience, ^m went out one by one, beginning at the *eldest*, even unto the last: and Jesus was left ⁿ alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, ^o where are those *thine* accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, ^p Neither do I condemn thee: ^q go, and sin no more.

31 Luko v. 32. xxi. 3. 5. xv. 7. 10. 32. Rom. ii. 4. v. 20, 21. 1 Tim. 15. Rev. ii. 21, 22.

xvii. 48. Prov. xii. 10. xxvi. 4. 5. Jer. xxvii. 29. 1 Cor. xiv. 24. 25. Col. iv. 6. Heb. iv. 13. 14. Rev. i. 16. 17. 16. xix. 15. k. Deut. xxi. 6, 7. Ps. l. 1-20. Mat. xi. 1-5. xxviii. 23-29. Rom. iii. 1-3. 21. 25. l. Gen. xlii. 21. 22. 1 Kings iii. 14. xlii. 18. Ps. 121. Ec. vii. 12. Mark vi. 14. 16. Luke xlii. 1-3. 10. 11. 15. 1 John iii. 20. m. 16. v. 12. 13. n. 5. 27. Ps. 139. 10. 16. xli. 14. 15. lxxi. 13. Luke x. 17. 12. o. 5. xl. 11, 12. p. 15. ii. 17. xviii. 28. Deut. xxi. 1. 18. xvii. 9. Luko ix. 56. x. 13. 14. Rom. xiii. 3. 4. 1 Cor. v. 12. q. 14. Job xxxiv. 31. 2. Prov. xxviii. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

more valuable, influences we may confidently apply for; these will not only be "in us a well of water springing up into everlasting life," but they will flow forth in our words and works, to water, fructify, and refresh our fellow pilgrims in the desert, and to be the means of quickening such as were dead in sin. (*Notes, Es.* xlvii. 1-12.) From our glorified Redeemer these holy streams have flowed, through the medium of the apostles, evangelists, and a succession of believers, down to us in this distant age, and in this remote corner of the earth: may we communicate them to those around us, and to such as shall succeed us, till the whole world be replenished by them.—But, alas! how few are thus athirst! Even they, who are for a time impressed and restrained, and who speak highly of the words of Jesus, as more excellent than those of all other teachers, often speedily lose their convictions, and go on in their sins; whilst proud infidels and Pharisees, with carnal scribes and priests, consider all as deluded, who coincide not with them in opinion. Frequently they revile as ignorant enthusiasts, or designing hypocrites, such men as are far more serious, diligent, and impartial in searching for the truth, than themselves; and whose words and works are sober, scriptural, and exemplary: but it seems enough for them to answer by saying, "Have any of the rulers and Pharisees believed in him?" Whereas the opinions of such men have more generally been a criterion of error, than the test of truth. But if a few of their own rank, education, or description, are convinced, and dare to avow the truth, they too are directly treated with obloquy and contempt, as weak deluded men, who have suffered themselves to become the dupes of fanatics and impostors.—Thus the wicked from age to age proceed in the same track: yet the Lord gradually brings forward the weak and timid of his sincere disciples, and makes use of them to disconcert the politic designs of his enemies; for ^h his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure."

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII. V. 1, 2. It is probable, that our Lord went every evening to Bethany, to the house of Martha, where he was more retired than he could have been in the city; but it is by some supposed, that he spent this night on the mount of Olives in devotion. He, however, returned early in the morning to the temple, that he might instruct the people there assembled, before they left Jerusalem the day after the conclusion of the feast.

V. 3-11. While our Lord was teaching the multitudes, his enemies concerted a plan for drawing him into a snare. A woman had been taken in adultery, whose guilt was undeniable: they therefore pretended a deference to his judgment and authority, and brought the criminal to him, that he might decide what punishment should be inflicted on her, as Moses had commanded that such criminals should be stoned. The law doomed both the adulterer and adulteress *to be put to death*, but these persons showed their partiality, by prosecuting the woman, and letting the man escape. In a case nearly parallel, *stoning* was specified, (*Marg. Ref.*) and probably, this had become the general punishment of all convicted of this crime. The Scribes and Pharisees, however, concluded, from many parts of our Lord's doctrine, that he deemed himself authorized to alter or abrogate the appointments of Moses; and therefore they desired his opinion. But, if he had ordered them to execute the law, they would doubtless have accused him to the Romans of assuming a judicial authority, independent of their government: had he directed them to set her at liberty, they would have represented him to the people as an enemy to the law, and the patron of the most infamous characters; and had he referred them to the Roman authority, they would have accused him to the multitude, as a betrayer of their liberties. Indeed they seem to have concluded, that he must inevitably either render himself obnoxious to the Romans, or unpopular

12 ¶ Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, 'I am the Light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness.' (Jer. xvii. 13.)

among the Jews, by his answer to this insidious question: and in either case, it would have facilitated the execution of their purpose of putting him to death. But he saw the wickedness of their hearts; and therefore he stooped down, as if he had not regarded them. Perhaps he wrote with his finger in the dust the sentence which he afterwards spake. Some think that he meant to teach them in this manner, that they ought to decide such matters by the written word; and others, that he intimated that such base hypocrites should be written in the earth. (Jer. xvii. 13.) But these are vague conjectures. 'To be willing to be ignorant of what our great Master has thought fit to conceal, is no inconsiderable part of Christian learning.' (Doddridge.) His apparent backwardness, however, to interfere, rendered the Scribes the more urgent; and therefore, at length, he abruptly ordered that man, who was without sin among them, to begin the execution of the criminal, by first casting a stone at her. It was appointed by the law, that the accuser should thus lead the way in putting the condemned person to death: the whole company that brought this woman were her accusers; but it would have been unsuitable for any one of them, who was conscious of secret wickedness, to have begun this severity, and therefore he ordered that person to do it, who was conscious of his own innocence. We may be sure our Lord did not mean, that no man ought to act as judge, or witness, in a criminal cause, who is not wholly exempt from sin in his own conduct; because that would disannul civil government, which is God's ordinance. But he knew the concealed iniquities of these men; and by thus appealing to their consciences in respect of themselves, he made them sensible of the impropriety of their taking an active part in this prosecution. A divine power doubtless attended his word, and a new conviction of guilt seized on them, which for the present disarmed their malice: and, perhaps fearing lest he should more openly and explicitly mention the particular crimes, in which they severally lived, they took the opportunity, whilst he again stooped down, to withdraw silently and singly; the eldest of the company, being most deeply alarmed, departing first, and the others following his example. Thus they were sent away in disgrace, and self-condemned, so that Jesus was left alone: that is, none remained with him of that company, save the woman, who stood in the midst of the court, where the people were assembled to attend on his doctrine; and there she waited to hear what sentence he would pass upon her. But having baffled the designs of his enemies, he declined all interference with the magistrate's office, and gave her permission to depart; exhorting her at the same time not to repeat her crime, or return to any of her former wickednesses. There is no decisive proof that she was a true penitent; for our Lord, in saying "Neither do I condemn thee," spake only of condemnation to death according to the judicial law; and the exhortation, "Sin no more," was a direct and strong condemnation of her conduct: yet if these remarkable circumstances were the means of her

ness, but 'shall have the light of life.

13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, 'Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

being converted, pardoned, and saved, it would appear peculiarly suited to His design, who "came not to call the "righteous, but sinners, to repentance." No conclusive argument can hence be drawn, concerning the punishment of adultery under the Christian dispensation; and doubtless it is absurd, that this crime should escape almost without any legal censure, when theft in many cases is punished with marked severity. The eleven first verses of this chapter, and the last verse of the preceding chapter, are wanting in some ancient copies and manuscripts; and several learned men have, on that ground, questioned whether the passage were genuine, or not. But others, who have most fully examined the subject, are satisfied that they are indeed a part of the apostolical narrative: and the objections made to it are evidently grounded on prejudice and misapprehension. 'The notice that Eusebius, and other ancient writers, have taken of the dubiousness of this passage, with a few other instances of a like nature, shows the critical exactness, with which they examined into the genuineness of the several parts of the New Testament; and so, on the whole, strengthens the evidence of Christianity.' (Doddridge.)

V. 12. After this interruption, our Lord proceeded to instruct the multitudes: and the sun being perhaps at this time just risen, he thence took occasion to declare himself to be "the Light of the world," (Notes, i. 4—9.) He is to men in general, as to the concerns of their souls, what the sun is in respect of their temporal life; namely, the Source and Fountain of all spiritual knowledge and wisdom, by which any man ever did, or ever shall, obtain the favour of God, do his will, and find eternal felicity. All other lights must be either typical, derived, or deluding. They who have taught the same truths, have in their measure reflected his light: they who have taught opposite opinions, have deceived men with a false glare of supposed science into the pit of destruction. He, "the Sun of Righteousness," had with his dawning beams afforded a degree of light to preceding generations; but he was now risen, and he called upon them to make use of his clearer light, in preference to that of the Mosaic dispensation, and in opposition to the instructions of false teachers, or of any others who pretended to illuminate mankind; assuring them, that no one who received his doctrine, obeyed his word, and followed him as his true disciple, should continue in ignorance, error, uncertainty, iniquity, or misery, however deeply he had before been involved in this complicated darkness. On the contrary, he should gradually be illuminated in the clear knowledge of God, and of every thing pertaining to acceptance, peace, and holiness; that so he might possess that divine light, which guides men safely and comfortably through this world of sin and sorrow, to the everlasting felicity of heaven. The Messiah had frequently been predicted under this image; (Marg. Ref.) so that this declaration implied an avowal of his character, and also that the Scribes and Pharisees, who opposed him, were blind guides and false teachers.

Num. xli. 3. 14 Jesus answered and said unto them,
 Neh. v. 14-19. Though I bear record of myself, * yet
 2 Cor. xi. 31. my record is true: for I know whence
 7 vii. vii. 29 x. I came, and whither I go; * but ye cannot
 15 36 xlii. 3. tell whence I come, and whither I
 xlii. 8. go.
 7 vii. 27, 28, ix. 20. 1 Sam.
 a vii. 24. I judge
 xvi. 7. Ps. lvi. 11.
 1. 2. xxi. 20. 15 Ye * a judge after the flesh; * I judge
 21. Am. v. 7. no man.
 vi. 12. Hab. i. 4.
 4. Rom. ii. 1. 16 And * yet if I judge, my judgment
 1. Cor. ii. 15. is true: * for I am not alone, but I and
 3-5 Jam. ii. 4. the Father that sent me.
 b ii. 17 xli. 47 xlii. 36.
 Luke xli. 14. 17 It is * also written in your law,
 v. 22-30. Ps. 7. 1. ix. xli. 1. 2. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. Zach. ix. 9. Acts xvii. 31. Rev. xix. 11. —
 1. 2. xxi. 3. 1. 2. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. Zach. ix. 9. Acts xvii. 31. Rev. xix. 11. —
 7. 2. 5. xxi. 3. 1. 2. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. Zach. ix. 9. Acts xvii. 31. Rev. xix. 11. —
 1. 2. xxi. 3. 1. 2. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. Zach. ix. 9. Acts xvii. 31. Rev. xix. 11. —

15 Ye * a judge after the flesh; * I judge no man.

16 And * yet if I judge, my judgment is true: * for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

17 It is * also written in your law,

V. 13-16. Some of the Pharisees, that were among the multitude, (perhaps enraged at the discomfiture of their brethren, as well as at the intimation of the preceding words,) observed, that as he bare witness to himself, his testimony ought to be considered as false or invalid, according to the common rule of judgment in such cases. To this he answered, that this rule did not apply to him; as he knew perfectly whence he came, and whither he was about to go; of which they were entirely ignorant. He had before shown them, that God had in various ways borne witness to him: yet they spake as if there had been no other proof of his being the Messiah, except his own word; as a mere man, like others, not giving any adequate proof of his divine mission, or the high claims which he advanced of dignity and authority. 'My coming from heaven on an embassy to you, and that testified by the Spirit to John Baptist, and by John Baptist to you, gives a validity to my testimony; and joins God the Father himself in the testimony with me. And as the Holy Ghost has testified that I am sent by God; so my ascension to heaven, (which will sufficiently prove my mission,) being known to me beforehand, though not to you, and being discoverable by the event to you also, it will follow, that my testimony of myself is authentic and valid.' (Hammond.) 'As I speak from my own certain knowledge; and I have already shown that I come with a divine commission, my testimony is perfectly true. I well know from whence I come, and whither I go; and the most evident demonstrations of it have been given to you, both in the nature of my doctrine, and in the miracles which I have wrought among you: but you are so perverse, that as often as I have hinted or declared it, you know not, to this day, from whence I come, and whither I am going; which is not to be ascribed to the want of sufficient evidence, but merely to the force of your own prejudices.' (Dodridge.) The consciousness of our Lord to his own divine dignity, and the foresight of his ascension and mediatorial exaltation, could not be adduced, *strictly speaking*, as an argument in proof of the validity of his testimony concerning himself, for the conviction of others; but it was proper, that he should speak in this manner concerning his own Deity and authority; and his words being confirmed by miracles, and other sufficient proof, would not fail to make a deep impression on numbers, leading them

That the testimony of two men is true.

18 I am * one that bear witness of myself, * and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

19 Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, * I ye neither know me nor my Father: * if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

20 These words spake Jesus * in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: * and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

Cor. iv. 4-6. Eph. i. 17. Col. i. 15. Heb. i. 3. 2. John 9. — 11 Chr. ix. 26. Mat. xxvii. 6. Mark xli. 43. — m 59 vii. 9. 30. 44. x. 39. xi. 9, 10. Luke xlii. 31-33. xx. 19.

to a more careful consideration of the subject, and fully satisfying all who were candid and teachable; while the event would effectually confute gainsayers, and still more illustrate the great doctrines concerning his person and salvation. As, however, he meant afterwards to recur to this, he seems to have waived the further discussion of it for the present, and only observed that the Pharisees were incompetent judges in such a cause: for they were not only ignorant of him, as coming down from heaven, and about shortly to return thither; but they were unacquainted even with the place of his nativity as man: and, moreover, they were so blinded by their carnal prejudices, that they judged of his pretensions, "according to the flesh," without any relish for the spiritual excellency of his character and doctrine, or desire of the real blessings of his kingdom. He came, however, among them as a Saviour, and did not mean at that time to denounce sentence, or execute vengeance, on any man; of which he had given them a proof, in his refusal to decide any thing concerning the woman taken in adultery. Yet, if he had assumed this character, he should certainly have judged with infallible equity and truth; as his union of nature, counsel, and operation with the Father, who sent him and was with him, must exclude all possibility of error or injustice. Though our Lord did not as a Judge pass sentence on the Scribes and Pharisees, yet he had clearly shown them what opinion he formed of their character and conduct; which the event, and especially the day of judgment, would prove to have been just and well grounded.

V. 17-20. The law, of which the Pharisees were so tenacious, admitted the evidence of *two men* as a sufficient proof of any fact; though the Scripture every where described mankind as prone to deceive, and liable to be deceived. Jesus therefore observed that he was one competent witness concerning his own nature and mission, (for he spake as a prophet, declaring his mission, and not as a criminal, who might not testify in his own cause;) and his Father was a second unexceptionable witness to him. Doubtless he referred to his own miracles, to the voice from heaven, and the fulfilment of ancient prophecies, by which it was proved that he was the Son of God. But the Jews either did not understand his meaning, or were unwilling fairly to meet the argument, and therefore they inquired who his Father was? He did not, however, see

30 ¶ As he spake these words, ^a many believed on him.

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, ¹ If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye ^m my disciples indeed;

32 And ^a ye shall know the truth, ^a and the truth shall make you free.

33 They answered him, ^a We be Abraham's seed, ^a and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

34 Jesus answered them, ^a Verily, verily, I say unto you, ^a Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin.

35 And ^a the servant abideth not in

the house for ever; ^a *but* the son abideth ever.

36 If ^a the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

37 I ^a know that ye are Abraham's seed: ^a but ye seek to kill me, ^a because my word hath no place in you.

38 I ^b speak that which I have seen with my Father: ^a and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, ^a If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

40 But ^a now ye seek to kill me, ^a a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.

that he said and did most perfectly pleased the Father, by fulfilling his eternal purposes, and displaying his glory,—Numbers, who then opposed him, would afterwards embrace Christianity: and vast multitudes would, by the awful judgments of God on the nation, be convinced that he was the promised Messiah. “The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth.” (Ps. ix. 16. Ez. xxviii. 22. xxix. 9. xxx. 19. xxxiii. 29.)

V. 30—36. The dignity and energy, attending the words of our Lord on this occasion, convinced many of his hearers that he was the Messiah, and they professed to believe in him. Directing, therefore, his discourse to them, he encouraged them to “continue in his word;” or to a persevering attendance on his instructions, belief of his declarations, reliance on his promises, and obedience to his commandments: notwithstanding all the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. If they did this, they would approve themselves his disciples *truly*, and not merely in name and temporary profession; and by the constant teaching of his word and Spirit, their prejudices would be removed, their mistakes rectified, their views enlarged, and their doubts and uncertainties excluded; so that they would know the divine truth and excellency of his doctrine, and be able to distinguish it from every specious delusion. Thus they would effectually learn where their hope and strength lay; and so be made free from the bondage of sin and Satan; from the love of the world and the fear of men; from enslaving attachments to traditional superstitions; from the yoke of the ceremonial law; from legal terrors and the spirit of bondage; and from the dread of death, and the condemnation due to their sins. In this way, they would possess the greatest possible liberty, in the willing delightful service and worship of God, and in the enjoyment of his favour. But they were, at that time, very far from thus understanding his words; nay, some present asserted “that they never were in bondage to any man.” As Abraham’s posterity, according to the revelation made by God to that patriarch, had been in the most abject bondage in Egypt; and as, afterwards, they had been

enslaved to several other nations, especially the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Syrians; and as they were then reduced into subjection to the Romans, it is wonderful how they could thus flatter themselves into a forgetfulness of their former and present condition. (*Marg Ref.*) If they spake of *personal* slavery, they certainly could not ascribe the exemption to their descent from Abraham, as many of their brethren had frequently been thus in bondage. If they meant that their political slavery was unjust usurpation, and contrary to their right as Abraham’s seed, (which was their constant pretext for rebelling against the Romans,) this could not in the least interfere with the Messiah’s restoring them to the possession of *actual* liberty. Our Lord, however, did not see good to refute their vain-glorious boast. Spiritual things were, in his judgment, incomparably most important; and he therefore only reminded them, that the man who practised any kind of habitual sin, was in fact a slave to that sin, and could have no right to boast of freedom; intimating that this was the case with most of them; especially of those who thus perversely cavilled at his gracious words. But if, instead of being evidently the slaves of sin, they had more exactly served God, according to the letter of the law, depending on it, and rejecting his salvation, they could not, on that account, expect to abide in the family for ever, as children and heirs, but to be excluded, like Ishmael, who was the son of Abraham by a bond-woman. But the Son of God, who was also eminently the Seed of Abraham, abideth for ever in the family as heir: if then he, as the Son and heir, made them free by his power and grace, according to the will of his Father, they would “be free indeed;” receiving the Spirit of adoption, and the privileges, the liberty and the inheritance of children.

V. 37—40. Our Lord allowed the external relation of these Jews to Abraham: but he opposed their presumptuous confidence in it; showing that this could not profit such as were of a contrary spirit to him; and this was certainly the case with those who were purposing to murder him, because his holy doctrine had no place in their

41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.

42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

43 Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.

44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do:

he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

47 He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

hearts, which were pre-occupied with contrary desires and affections. Indeed, his doctrine and their practice could not but be opposite to each other; for he spake those truths which he had seen with his Father, and was come from heaven to testify to the world; and they did those wicked works which they had seen with and learned from their father, acting in concert with him, and copying his example. This intimation caused the Jews again to insist upon it, that Abraham was their father: but Jesus showed them, that if they had been the genuine children of that father of the faithful, they would have copied his example; whereas they were seeking to murder him, whom at least they could not deny to be a man, that had told them the truth, as he had received it from God; which did not at all accord to Abraham's example, who always welcomed every discovery of the truth and will of God with humble faith and obedience.

V. 41—47. There was, however, a sense in which it might truly be said that the unbelieving Jews performed the works of their father. On hearing this, the objectors, perceiving the drift of our Lord's discourse, answered, with indignation, that "they were not born of fornication;" they were not the descendants of Gentile idolaters, or apostate Jews, nor themselves the worshippers of idols; but they had one Father, even God, whose convalidated people and children they were. But Jesus observed to them, that if God indeed were their Father, if they had been born of God and adopted by him, they would certainly have loved him, the beloved Son of God, "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his Person;" for he proceeded forth and came from God (which words must imply far more than his coming into the world as Mediator, being different from what are spoken of any other person;) neither did he come of his own accord, but as sent and commissioned by the Father, to display his glory and make known his truth. Had they, therefore, either supremely desired the favour of God, or loved his holy perfections, or sought his glory, they must have loved the character and doctrine of Jesus, and have welcomed him as their Teacher, Saviour, and King. As the matter was thus plain, how was it, that they did not understand his discourse? Truly because their pride and carnal prejudices closed their minds against his holy doctrine; and therefore they were determined not to believe that he was the Messiah and the Son of God, or even a

Teacher sent from him. In short, they were the children of the Devil, and bore the image of their Father; they were therefore resolved to perpetrate those vile designs, which originated from the lusts that Satan exalted in their hearts, and which accorded to his malignant purposes of dishonouring God, opposing true religion, and destroying its friends as much as possible. From the beginning of the world, or the existence of man, that great adversary of God and of his creation, had been a murderer, or man-slayer. Having departed from his original love of truth, and his fidelity and loyalty to his Maker and Lord, by his awful apostacy, he proceeded as soon as possible to murder the souls and bodies of men. By his lies, he tempted Eve, and, through her, Adam, to eat the forbidden fruit; by which he, in a sense, murdered the whole human race at once. Soon after, he instigated wicked Cain to murder his righteous brother Abel; which was the *beginning*, and *specimen*, of all the innocent blood shed by persecutors ever since. He hath always been the great tempter of mankind to all kinds of quarrels and contentions, which terminate in private murder, or in bloody destructive wars and cruel oppressions and massacres. He prompts men to these excesses, by which multitudes destroy themselves and each other: and to suicide in all its varied forms. At the same time his suggestions tend equally to the ruin of men's immortal souls. All these murders are connected with lies and deceit: all persecutions are excited on lying pretences, or in support of false religions. In a word, the Devil is the great promoter of falsehood of every kind throughout the earth, and does all his mischief by it; even as God uses truth as the medium of all good to men: he is altogether composed, as it were, of subtlety, dissimulation, and treachery; so that when he propagates a lie of any kind, he acts in character, and brings forth out of his own inexhaustible treasury; for he is not only a liar, but the original author of all lies, and the father of all liars. Now, it was evident that these Jews were the children of this great murderer and liar, in that they refused to believe in Jesus, and sought to put him to death, not only *though* he told them the truth, but *because* he did so. Their wicked hearts were diametrically opposite to the truth, which must be holy and humbling; yet if he had taught them any false doctrine, it would have been congenial to their pride and lusts, and they would have been disposed to receive it. But could they convict him of

CHAP. IX.

Jesus gives sight to one who was born blind, 1—7. The man shows his neighbours by what means his eyes were open-

of the day of his appearing upon earth. The Patriarch had, by faith in the divine promises, and through several types, looked forward to the appointed season of his coming for the redemption of his people, with the highest satisfaction; and his hope of salvation was grounded on the same word; but the degenerate offspring rejected and hated Him, whom their illustrious ancestor had at so great a distance beheld with the greatest reverence and joy! The Jews perversely understood him to mean, that Abraham had actually conversed with him, as a man living upon earth at that time. He was not yet fifty years old, and would he pretend, that he had seen Abraham, who died above one thousand eight hundred years before? Jesus could not be at this time above thirty-five years of age: but his gravity, joined with his incessant labours, made him look much older than he was. —To their inquiry he answered by solemnly saying, "Before Abraham was I AM." The use of the present tense in this connexion, and the construction of the passage, require us to understand it as a declaration, that, as the great I AM, who appeared to Moses, he possessed an undivided and independent existence, before Abraham was brought into being, yea, from all eternity. (*Marg. Ref.*) Indeed the words seem incapable of any other construction, (at least consistently with the common rules of grammar,) which can render them intelligible to a man of ordinary capacity. Thus the Jews evidently understood them; and therefore they were about to stone him for blasphemy, without any process of law, or regard to the Roman authority, their indignation was so greatly excited. But by his miraculous power he concealed himself from their view; and, passing through the midst of them without being perceived, he eluded their malice for the present. Probably this discourse left a durable impression on many of the hearers, and prepared their minds for receiving the testimony of his apostles, after the pouring out of the Holy Ghost. 'Christ here only signifies, 'that he was before Abraham, in the decree of God,' (*Grotius.*) 'But, 1. Christ answers to the objection of the Jews, which had no respect to the priority of these two persons, in the decree of God, but as to actual existence. 2. In this sense even Judas, and all the murderers of our Lord might be before Abraham had a being.' (*Whitby.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—11.

In the conduct of our Lord we see an example of the strictest attention to retired devotion, connected with the greatest diligence in seizing on every opportunity of public usefulness: but we must be very careful in redeeming our time, and very moderate in animal recreation, if we would tread in his steps, and not all these distinct, and too often detached, parts of our duty to entrench upon each other. Even Jesus himself could scarcely be more

ed, 8—12. He is brought to the Pharisees, who strictly examine both him and his parents, 13—23. They are offended at him, for contending that Jesus is a prophet, and disdainfully excommunicate

active in doing good, than his zealous enemies have always been in devising and compassing evil; for malice will convert any thing into an occasion of mischief. The ministers of the Gospel therefore want divine wisdom and fortitude; for they will be encountered by subtle, as well as powerful, opponents; yet their enemies are seldom more dangerous, than when they assume the appearance of friendship, and, in the language of respect, attempt to inveigle them to intermeddle with matters not belonging to them, or to interfere in the peculiar concerns of rulers and princes. Doubtless adultery and other crimes merit severer punishment from the magistrate, than they generally meet with; and we may sometimes state and explain the law of God respecting them: but we should not leave our peculiar employment to direct legislators or magistrates. If any persuade us openly to meddle in such matters, we should look upon it as a temptation; and we may suspect that this is sometimes done, that they may accuse us, either as ambitious men who are enemies to civil liberty, or as turbulent innovators who are disaffected to the authority which God hath placed over us. We should therefore generally act as though we heard them not; and answer repeated solicitations by some serious address to men's consciences; thus studying "to be quiet, and mind our own business." The prosecution of criminals is in itself a good work; yet it is frequently conducted by such persons and from such motives, that the accusers are in the sight of God the most atrocious offenders. From regard to society they cannot be wholly excluded; nor should we in any sense require too much of those who concur in the necessary but painful employment of bringing offenders to justice: yet we may fairly observe, that he who is concerned in the prosecution of another for a capital offence, and is himself living in the practice of unrepented habitual wickedness, has need to tremble at the prospect of more terrible vengeance from God, than that which he calls for upon a fellow criminal from human justice. He should therefore pause, and prepare for his awful employment, by self-examination, repentance, faith, prayer, and amendment of life; lest he should bring upon himself swift destruction. But were such barriers placed around our courts of judicature; were such rules proclaimed in them, how would they be thinned! Whilst many convicted by their own consciences, would go out one by one, perhaps beginning at the eldest and greatest persons concerned, the prosecution might be left unfinished, and the criminals be allowed to escape. Nay, if our most solemn religious ordinances could be fenced against those who are habitually practising secret iniquity, it is to be feared that the small number of our communicants would be greatly diminished. These reflections may convince us what little reason men have to object to the doctrine of free salvation: they only, who have always performed a sinless obedience, ought to cast a stone at the preachers of unmerited forgiveness and eternal life by faith in Christ: all else should thankfully

him, 24—34. Jesus makes himself known to him, as the Son of God; and he believes in him and worships him, 35—38. Christ declares the event of his coming to be,

that the blind might see, and the seeing be made blind, with reference to the proud and wilful blindness of the Pharisees, 39—41.

receive their message. The same considerations may also show us the readiest way of dealing with pertinacious objectors: an address to their consciences, which calls their sins to remembrance, may render those silent, from fear of detection and recollection of their guilt, whom no arguments can reach: and though we must not excuse crimes, nor object to the infliction of merited punishment, yet we should hence learn to be gentle and compassionate, even in performing the severest offices; and ever to show a disposition to forgive and be kind to the vilest, as we hope for mercy from God for our own souls. We should, however, strongly urge the admonition, "Sin no more;" otherwise an escape from temporal punishment can only give an opportunity of "treasuring up wrath against the day of his wrath."

V. 12—29.

Every action of Jesus, as well as his whole doctrine, shows him to us as "The Light of the world." Let us then no longer look to the schools of philosophy for illumination, and let us not implicitly follow any man's teaching: on the contrary, let us follow Jesus, that we "may not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." If we have begun to attend on him for instruction, he hath already in some things, "made darkness light for us," and our path "will shine more and more unto the perfect day." But unbelievers "know not whence he came, and whither he is gone:" "they judge after the flesh;" yet they presume to judge Him, before whose righteous tribunal they must shortly stand; whereas they are incompetent to decide upon the principles and conduct of his meanest disciple. Such men often oppose precepts to doctrines: yet those precepts, properly explained, condemn their conduct, and bear witness to the doctrines which they oppose: yea, in every way God testifieth to his Son, that salvation is by faith in him alone. They, who know not his glory and grace, know not the Father that sent him: but by the knowledge of the Son, sinners attain to the sanctifying and beatifying knowledge of the Father also. Though the Redeemer has left this earth, where he was so hated and despised, yet none that truly seek him shall die in their sins, or be excluded from that place, whither as our Forerunner he is for us entered: but they who continue to deride his warnings, and thus prove themselves "earthly, sensual, and devilish," will die unpardoned, and perish as "vessels of wrath fitted for destruction." But some will say, Who is Jesus? And what are we to believe concerning him? We allow him to have been a Prophet, a Teacher of most excellent morality, and a bright Example of beneficence and patience: nay, we admit that he was the chief of men, or even of all creatures: and we would even grant him to be something more than a creature, if we could do it without acknowledging him as "God over all, blessed for evermore:" and will not this suffice? Let Jesus himself

answer this question. Is this to honour him, even as we honour the Father? Does this answer to his being the Light of the world, the Life of men, the Resurrection of the dead, One with the Father, the everlasting I AM? He who said such things of himself in the vale of humiliation, will not retract them on the throne of glory: and they, who do not believe in him as all this, and as more than words can fully express, will perish in their sins, whatever they object to the bigotry of those who fairly warn them of their danger. For Jesus hath much to say and to judge of them: and all shall know, by their conversion, or in their condemnation, that he always spake and did those things which pleased the Father, even when he claimed the highest honours to himself.

V. 30—38.

Many profess the great doctrines of Christianity without saving faith: when we therefore see men convinced of evangelical truths, we should warn them of the temptations and dangers to which they will be exposed, that they may be excited to guard against them. By continuing in the word of Christ with an obedient faith, we evince ourselves his disciples indeed, and prove that we have not received "the seed in stony ground." Thus we attain a fuller and a more satisfactory knowledge of the truth: and this teaches us the nature, excellency, Author, and means of true liberty; and leads us to pant after, pursue, and enjoy that precious blessing. But as men are capable of imposing on themselves, through self-flattery, in the most unaccountable manner, in respect of their secular concerns, no wonder they mistake their character and state in relation to God and the eternal world. It is, however, most certain, that "he who committeth sin, is the slave of sin:" and we may infer safely, that many declaim and dispute about liberty, boast of it, nay, fight for it, who are themselves base slaves to ambition, avarice, lust, anger, or some other grovelling or malignant tyrant. How highly soever we value freedom, personal or political, civil or religious, (and when freedom is soberly ascertained, it can scarcely be too highly prized,) we must recollect that it is a mere shadow to the slave of sin and Satan: and we may well weep to see men laden with heavy chains, yet glorying in their liberty, till death terminates their delusion, and makes them know that they must be slaves for ever.—From this awful state, no maxims of philosophy, no systems of ethics, no inventions of superstition, no external ordinances, can deliver any man: nay, God may outwardly be served from slavish fear, or mercenary hope, and no liberty be obtained or enjoyed; but "if the Son make us free, we shall be free indeed," and for ever. While, therefore, men stand up for freedom, rights, and privileges, let every one, who would be truly wise, first come to Christ for that real and enduring liberty, to which he calls us by his Gospel.

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b 31. Mat. xvi.

14.

c Joh. i. 9-12. h.

3-6. xxi. 27

xxii. 6. Ac

xxiii. 3. xiii. 7

Be ix. 1. 2

Luke xii. 5-5.

Acts xxviii. 4

d xi. 4. 49. xiv.

14-13. Mat.

xi. 5. 19. 10. 21

o. xxi. v. 19. 10. 21

x. 12. 37. 39.

xxvii. 4. Luke

xii. 32. 34.

Acts iv. 10.

1. xi. 10. xii. 25.

Be ix. 10. 15.

xxviii. 10.

Eph. v. 10. Col.

1. p. 2.

AND as *Jesus* passed by, ^a he saw a man which was blind from *his* birth.

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, ^b who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

3 *Jesus* answered, ^c Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: ^b but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

4 I ^e must work the works of him that sent me, ^f while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

5 As ^g long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.

6 When he had thus spoken, ^h he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he ^{*} anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay;

7 And said unto him, ⁱ Go wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, ⁱ Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, ^m and came seeing.

1. x. 36. Rom. viii. 3. Gal. iv. 4. --- m 39. xi. 37. Et. ix. 11. Ps. cxlviii. 8. Is. xlii. 18. 19. xxxiii. 3. xxv. 5. xlii. 7. 16-18. xliii. 8. Luke iii. 32. Acts xxvi. 16.

g 1-9. iii. 13-21. vii. 12. xii. 35. 36. Is. xlii. 6. 7. xliii. 7. xli. 7. 2-3. Mat. ix. 5. Mat. ix. 16. Luke ii. 32. Acts xiii. 47. xxvi. 10. 21. Eph. v. 14. Rev. xx. 23. h Mark. xii. 29. xiii. 23. Rev. xii. 18. i Or. spread the clay upon the eyes of the blind man. 12 Kings v. 10-14. k 11. Neh. iii. 15. Siloam. Is. viii. 6. Siloam. 18.

V. 39--47.

Alas! immense numbers boast of being *Christians*, as absurdly as the Jews did that they were *Abraham's children*; and they suppose that God is their Father, because they have been baptized, even as the Jews did because of circumcision. But which do they resemble most, the primitive Christians, or those who sought to murder Christ, because they could not endure his doctrines and precepts? Are they born again, and made partakers of a divine and holy nature? Do they above all things love *Jesus*, and his salvation and service? If there is nothing of this kind in their dispositions and conduct, but very many things of a contrary nature, let them not deceive themselves: they are the children of him whose works they do and whose image they bear; and the pride, rebellion, dissimulation, malice, and malignity of numbers called Christians, show them to be the offspring of that old apostate, murderer, and liar, the devil. Such affronting applications of evangelical truth, induce men to complain that they cannot understand the words of Christ: no evidence can convince them that those doctrines are true, which reduce them to the alternative of renouncing and mortifying every sin, or of perishing for ever in hell. The most unexceptionable conduct of those, who speak the words of God, will not procure them credit, "because they tell the truth;" but if any improbable report be spread, or any new heresy started, the same persons will embrace it with the most implicit and absurd credulity. The reason is evident; "they are not of God, and therefore they cannot hear his words."

V. 48--59.

Calumny and reproach must be the recompense of those who stand up for "the truth as it is in *Jesus*;" and they may expect to be called the enemies of mankind, of their country, nay, of the Church and religion; for the more they honour God, the more wicked men will dishonour them. We must, however, still direct men to *Jesus*, not seeking our own glory, but leaving the matter to him who seeketh and judgeth: for we are assured, that they who keep his sayings shall never see death. We should steadfastly profess what we know and believe concerning God and religion; whatever wrong constructions may be put upon our words by those who falsely claim him as their God, yet know him not: and if we be heirs

of Abraham's faith, we shall both trust him with our temporal protection, and rejoice with glad exultation in expectation of that day, when the Saviour who said, "Before Abraham was, I AM," shall appear in his glory to the confusion of his enemies, and to complete the salvation of all who believe in him; while they shall shout in triumphant strains, "Lo, This is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us. This is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

NOTES.

CHAP. IX. V. 1-3. Though the first words of this chapter seem connected with the conclusion of the foregoing; yet it is generally thought that some months had intervened: for the events before recorded took place at the feast of tabernacles, but those of this chapter are supposed to have occurred at the feast of dedication about a quarter of a year afterwards; (x. 22.) *Jesus* passing on the streets of Jerusalem met a man, who was known to have been-born blind: and the disciples thence took occasion to ask a question, which seems *in part* to have arisen from the opinion, that men in this world fare better, or worse, according to their behaviour in some pre-existent state, of which they have no recollection or consciousness! Many of the Jews at this time had imbibed that absurd sentiment from the heathens: for, not being satisfied with the scriptural account of the entrance of sin and death into the world, they had recourse to this notion to solve the difficulties, which they met with in the dispensations of Providence, from observing the extraordinary calamities attendant on some men, more than on others, through the whole course of their lives. The disciples therefore desired to be informed, whether this man's calamity was the punishment of his own misconduct in a pre-existent state, or whether his parents had brought it on him and themselves, by some heinous misconduct? (Many think that the sin mentioned, Lev. xx. 18, is referred to.) But our Lord assured them, that neither the one nor the other was the real cause of his being born blind; but it was so ordered on purpose, that the powerful operation of God by his hands might be openly displayed in restoring the blind man to sight. No doubt his parents were sinners, and deserved far worse than this affliction; and the man was born in sin as others are: but these were not the *immediate* causes of this singular calamity, which was appointed for another most important and merciful reason.

8 The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, ^a Is not this he that ^o sat and begged?

9 Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

10 Therefore said they unto him, ^r How were thine eyes opened?

11 He answered and said, ^a A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

12 Then said they unto him, ^r Where is he? He said, I know not.

13 They ^r brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

14 And ^t it was the sabbath-day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.

15 Then again ^u the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, ^x This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath-day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? ^y and there was a division among them.

17 They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, ^z He is a prophet.

18 But the ^a Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.

^a Ruth i. 19.
^b Sam. xxi. 11, 12.
^c 1 Sam. ii. 8.
^d Mark x. 38.
^e Luke xvi. 20.
^f 22. xvi. 38.
^g Acts ii. 2-11.

^h 15. 21. 26. iii. 5.
ⁱ Ex. xi. 5.
^j Mark iv. 27.
^k 1 Cor. xv. 39.
^l q. 6. 7. 27. Jer. xxxvi. 17. 18.
^m Matt. i. 21-25.

ⁿ r. 11-13. vii. 11. Ex. ii. 18-20.
^o vii. 3-6. xl. 46.
^p 47. xii. 19.
^q 42.
^r v. 9. 16. 18. vii. 22. 23. Matt. xii. 1-14. Mark ii. 23-28. iii. 1-6.
^s Luke vi. 1-11. xiii. 10-17. xiv. 1-5.

^u 10, 11. 26, 27.

^x 24. 30-33. iii. 2. y. 36. xiv. 11. xv. 24.

^y vii. 12. 43. x. 19. Luke xii. 51. -53. Acts xiv. 4.

^z iv. 19. vi. 14. Luke xxiv. 19. Acts ii. 22. iii. 22-26. x. 38. r. v. 41. xii. 37-40. Gen. xix. 14. Luke xvi. 31. Heb. iii. 15. iv. 11.

V. 4-7. Our Lord next observed, that notwithstanding the malice of his enemies, it was requisite for him to work the works which his Father had sent him to perform, during the short remnant of his life on earth: for his crucifixion would soon take place, which would end his personal labours and miracles, as the night does the work of the day, or as death terminates the services and fixes the state of every one. It was also proper for him to open the man's eyes, as an emblem of his enlightening the minds of men by the knowledge of divine truth. Whilst he continued on earth, he was "the Light of the world," by his personal ministry and miracles; and he would be the same, by his doctrine and his Spirit, to the end of time. He therefore anointed the man's eyes with clay formed for that purpose, (which would seem rather to have a tendency to close than to open them,) and then directed him to go and wash at the pool of Siloam, which, signifying *Sent*, might be a type of him whom the Father had sent to be the Light of the world. (*Marg. Ref.*) Accordingly the man, having heard of the miracles which Jesus performed, and hoping for a cure, obeyed; and not only thus received his sight, but was also enabled to make an immediate and proper use of his eyes, and so returned seeing every object distinctly: for it is a fact now well ascertained, that, when sight is given by a surgical operation to those who were born blind, they require a considerable time to learn the proper use of the newly acquired sense, as well as great care in preventing any injury to it. Perhaps our Lord took this method to make trial of the man's faith and obedience; or to show that the most unlikely means will be efficacious, when he appoints and blesses them. As far as I can recollect, this is the only instance in which sight was miraculously given to one born blind: and indeed "opening the eyes of the blind," strictly speaking, was a miracle peculiar to our Lord himself, and is repeatedly mentioned in the prophecies of his coming. It is neither included in the commissions given to the apostles and seventy disciples; nor was it performed, either by them, or by any of the ancient prophets.

The removal of Saul's temporary blindness by Ananias, is, I think, the only exception. The same is observable also of opening the ears of the deaf, and the mouths of the dumb. (*Ex. iv. 11. Is. xxix. 18. xxxv. 5, 6. Matt. ix. 33. Mark vii. 37.*)

V. 9. *Like him*, &c. 'The circumstance of his having received his sight, would give him an air of spirit and cheerfulness, and would render him something unlike what he was before.' (*Doddridge.*)

V. 12. *Know not*. 'I have never yet seen him, nor ever conversed with him, otherwise than I have just told you.' (*Doddridge.*)

V. 13. "They brought him to the Pharisees;" that is, to the council, which chiefly consisted of this sect; whence, in this evangelist, the whole council passeth under the name of Pharisees. This they might do, either out of ill-will to Christ, or out of curiosity, to know whether they would own the person who had done this wonderful miracle to be the very man of whom Isaiah had prophesied, that he should "open the eyes of the blind." And surely the providence of God so ordered this, that they might hear from the mouth of the blind man a testimony, which would either convince them, or render their unbelief without excuse. (*Whitby.*) 'They brought him to the Pharisees, in the Sanhedrim, that he might be examined by them; that so, if there was any fraud in the matter, they might discover and expose it.' (*Doddridge.*)

V. 14. It is said, that anointing the eyes with any kind of unguent, or even with spittle, on the sabbath-day, was forbidden by a tradition of the elders: if so, our Lord might use this method of opening the man's eyes, as a protest against their absurd and frivolous traditions.

V. 16. *Division*. Or, *Schism*; that is the council was divided into two parties, which contended with each other, continuing in the same place. It is probable, that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, with some others, who privately favoured our Lord, embraced this opportunity of checking the violent proceedings of his enemies.

c. v. 14 Ps xxvii.
10 Rom. x. 20.
d. 1. 49, 50. iii. 15
— 18, 39. xi. 63
x. 27. xx. 23. 31.
Act. vii. 37. 18.
20. i. John. iv. 13.
v. 5. 10-13. 20.
e. 1. 18. 34. Ps. ii.
7. 12. Matt. xvi.
16. Rom. ix. 1.
Heb. i. 2-9
f. 3. 1. Prov. xxx.
3. 4. Cant. v. 9.
Matt. x. 23.
g. iv. 26. vii. 17.
xiv. 21-24. Ps.
xxx. 9. 2. 14.
Matt. xi. 23.
xii. 11, 12. Act.
x. 31-33.
h. 12. xlv. 26. Ps. ii.
12. xlv. 11. Matt. xiv. 23. xxviii. 9. 17. Luke xxiv. 52. Rev. v. 9-11.

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out: and when he had found him, he said unto him, ^a Dost thou believe on ^e the Son of God?

36 He answered and said, ^f Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

37 And Jesus said unto him, ^g Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

38 And he said, ^h Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

39 ⁱ And Jesus said, ⁱ For judgment I am come into this world; ^k that they which see not might see; and that they which see ⁱ might be made blind.

40 And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, ^m Are we blind also?

41 Jesus saith unto them, ⁿ If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

ii. 10-12. i. John. ii. 11. — m. 34. vii. 47-52. Matt. xiv. 12-14. xxviii. 16, 17. 19. 21. 40. Luke. xi. 39. 40. 45. 46. Rom. ii. 19-22. — n. xv. 22-24. Prov. xxvi. 12. 14. v. 20. 27. Jer. ii. 33. Luke. xii. 47. Heb. x. 26, 27. i. John. i. 6-10.

iii. 17. v. 22-27.
viii. 15, 16. xii. 47. 48. Jer. i. 9.
ii. Luke. ix. 34.
xii. 20. 2 Cor. i. 4.
i. 16.
1. 29. 36-39. xlvii.
12. xlv. 49. Mc.
x. 5. 1. Luc. i.
74. iv. 18. v. 1.
21. Act. xxviii.
19. 2. Cor. iv. 4.
— 6. Eph. iv. 14.
1. 8. ii. 40. 41. 48. v.
9. 10. 28. 18.
xiii. 18-30. 34. iv.
18. Matt. vi. 23.
xlvii. 13-15. Luke.
x. 34. 35. Rom.
xi. 7-10. 2. The.
ii. 10-12. i. John. ii. 11. — m. 34. vii. 47-52. Matt. xiv. 12-14. xxviii. 16, 17. 19. 21. 40. Luke. xi. 39. 40. 45. 46. Rom. ii. 19-22. — n. xv. 22-24. Prov. xxvi. 12. 14. v. 20. 27. Jer. ii. 33. Luke. xii. 47. Heb. x. 26, 27. i. John. i. 6-10.

Moses was dead; and they knew how to explain away his meaning, and to render his writings subservient to their own ambition and interest: whereas Jesus was a living reprover of their hypocrisy, and a formidable rival and adversary to their reputation and authority. The man, therefore, under all his disadvantages, being free from their prejudices, argued more solidly than they all. He exposed their obstinate and prejudiced ignorance, by expressing the greatest astonishment that they could doubt whence that person was, who had wrought such a miracle as had never before been heard of. God did not regard the prayers of notoriously wicked men; much less would he enable an impostor to work such a stupendous miracle, in confirmation of his doctrine: so that, if Jesus had not been of God, he could not have done any thing of this kind. (Note, Matt. xii. 22-30.) This argument, which it was impossible to answer, and which convicted them of malice and folly, excited their most indignant resentment: and, being ignorant of the *Scriptural* doctrine, that *all men* are born in sin, they considered his bodily blindness as a demonstration that he came into the world under the divine displeasure, and far more depraved than other men: and was it proper that so vile and ignorant a wretch should presume to instruct them, who were Pharisees, Scribes, and Rulers, assembled in council? Or could such insolence be endured? Thus they disdainfully closed their ears to the truth, and excommunicated the man for his honest and sensible observation! 'See here a blind man, and unlearned, judging more rightly of divine things, than the whole learned council of the Pharisees! Whence we may learn, that we are not always to be led by the authority of councils, popes, and bishops; and that it is not absurd for laymen sometimes to vary from their opinions.' (Whitby.)

V. 35-36. 'The condition of those persons is very happy, who are thrust out to the greatest distance by impious persons, (glorying in the name of the Church,) that Christ himself may approach still nearer to them.' (Beza.) Jesus, knowing what persecution the man endured on his account, found him out, and made himself known to him as the Son of God, in order to his further instruction and encouragement; and the man, who before considered him as a prophet, now believed in and worshipped him in a far higher character. Without doubt the worship that Jesus accepted from him was at least equal to that which apostles and angels decidedly refused; (Notes, Acts x. 25, 26. Rev. xxii. 9.)

V. 39-41. Our Lord's address to the man might be in private, but what follows must have been more open; for he declared in the hearing of the Pharisees, that though in secular matters he would not judge or inflict punishment, (viii. 15,) yet he came into the world on purpose to discover men's secret characters, and to execute spiritual judgments on specious hypocrites. As by his miraculous power the blind received their sight, so by his doctrine the poor, the ignorant, and the simple, and even the benighted Gentiles, would be made wise and discerning in the things of God: and, at the same time, they, who were most proud of superior knowledge, learning, and wisdom, and most renowned in this respect, would be shown to be blind in spiritual things, and have their eyes *judicially* closed. The Pharisees readily perceived that this referred to them; and therefore they disdainfully inquired, whether he meant that they were blind also? To this he replied, that if they had been really blind or ignorant by misfortune, or through want of capacity, or opportunity of instruction, they would comparatively have been free from guilt in their opposition to him; but their abundant opportunities, and their high conceit of their own knowledge and discernment whilst they wilfully shut their eyes against the light, would leave them without excuse, under the guilt and power of their aggravated wickedness, and under the heavy wrath of God. (Note, xv. 22-25.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-12.

It becomes us to be very cautious how we ascribe the personal or relative calamities of others to their peculiar sinfulness: for the Lord may have far other reasons for afflicting them; and they, whom he most loves, have often been long and sharply tried, in order to the display of his grace in supporting and delivering them. But we can never do wrong, in applying to Jesus to solve our difficulties; for he is "the Light of the world," from whom we must derive all our knowledge and instruction. Let us also learn to copy his perseverance in doing good, amidst discouragements, revilings, and injuries; and let every one seize the present hour to ensure his own salvation and do the work of God, remembering how speedily the night may come in which no man can work. (Note, Ec. ix. 10.) They, who proudly confide in their own understandings and reasonings, are incompetent judges of the Lord's works and ways, for he generally employs such

CHAP. X.

True shepherds enter by the door into the sheepfold, are acknowledged by the sheep, and go before them; being thus distinguished from dishonest and corrupt teachers, 1—8. Christ is the Door, and the good Shepherd, who lays down his life for the sheep, 9—18. Divers opinions concerning him, 19—21. He proves his mission by his works, assures his sheep of eternal life, and declares that he and the Father are one, 22—30. The Jews attempt to stone him; but he justifies his

doctrine, and rescues himself from them, 31—39. He goes beyond Jordan, where many believe on him, 40—42.

VERILY, verily, I say unto you, ^b He that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, ^c the same is a thief and a robber.

2 But ^d he that entereth in by the door, is ^e the shepherd of the sheep :

3 To him ^f the porter openeth ; ^g and ^h ⁱ ^j ^k ^l ^m ⁿ ^o ^p ^q ^r ^s ^t ^u ^v ^w ^x ^y ^z ^{aa} ^{ab} ^{ac} ^{ad} ^{ae} ^{af} ^{ag} ^{ah} ^{ai} ^{aj} ^{ak} ^{al} ^{am} ^{an} ^{ao} ^{ap} ^{aq} ^{ar} ^{as} ^{at} ^{au} ^{av} ^{aw} ^{ax} ^{ay} ^{az} ^{ba} ^{bb} ^{bc} ^{bd} ^{be} ^{bf} ^{bg} ^{bh} ^{bi} ^{bj} ^{bk} ^{bl} ^{bm} ^{bn} ^{bo} ^{bp} ^{bq} ^{br} ^{bs} ^{bt} ^{bu} ^{bv} ^{bw} ^{bx} ^{by} ^{bz} ^{ca} ^{cb} ^{cc} ^{cd} ^{ce} ^{cf} ^{cg} ^{ch} ^{ci} ^{cj} ^{ck} ^{cl} ^{cm} ^{cn} ^{co} ^{cp} ^{cq} ^{cr} ^{cs} ^{ct} ^{cu} ^{cv} ^{cw} ^{cx} ^{cy} ^{cz} ^{da} ^{db} ^{dc} ^{dd} ^{de} ^{df} ^{dg} ^{dh} ^{di} ^{dj} ^{dk} ^{dl} ^{dm} ^{dn} ^{do} ^{dp} ^{dq} ^{dr} ^{ds} ^{dt} ^{du} ^{dv} ^{dw} ^{dx} ^{dy} ^{dz} ^{ea} ^{eb} ^{ec} ^{ed} ^{ee} ^{ef} ^{eg} ^{eh} ^{ei} ^{ej} ^{ek} ^{el} ^{em} ^{en} ^{eo} ^{ep} ^{eq} ^{er} ^{es} ^{et} ^{eu} ^{ev} ^{ew} ^{ex} ^{ey} ^{ez} ^{fa} ^{fb} ^{fc} ^{fd} ^{fe} ^{ff} ^{fg} ^{fh} ^{fi} ^{fj} ^{fk} ^{fl} ^{fm} ^{fn} ^{fo} ^{fp} ^{fq} ^{fr} ^{fs} ^{ft} ^{fu} ^{fv} ^{fw} ^{fx} ^{fy} ^{fz} ^{ga} ^{gb} ^{gc} ^{gd} ^{ge} ^{gf} ^{gg} ^{gh} ^{gi} ^{gj} ^{gk} ^{gl} ^{gm} ^{gn} ^{go} ^{gp} ^{gq} ^{gr} ^{gs} ^{gt} ^{gu} ^{gv} ^{gw} ^{gx} ^{gy} ^{gz} ^{ha} ^{hb} ^{hc} ^{hd} ^{he} ^{hf} ^{hg} ^{hh} ^{hi} ^{hj} ^{hk} ^{hl} ^{hm} ^{hn} ^{ho} ^{hp} ^{hq} ^{hr} ^{hs} ^{ht} ^{hu} ^{hv} ^{hw} ^{hx} ^{hy} ^{hz} ^{ia} ^{ib} ^{ic} ^{id} ^{ie} ^{if} ^{ig} ^{ih} ⁱⁱ ^{ij} ^{ik} ^{il} ^{im} ⁱⁿ ^{io} ^{ip} ^{iq} ^{ir} ^{is} ^{it} ^{iu} ^{iv} ^{iw} ^{ix} ^{iy} ^{iz} ^{ja} ^{jb} ^{jc} ^{jd} ^{je} ^{jf} ^{jj} ^{jk} ^{jl} ^{jm} ^{jn} ^{jo} ^{jp} ^{jq} ^{jr} ^{js} ^{jt} ^{ju} ^{jv} ^{jw} ^{jx} ^{ky} ^{kz} ^{la} ^{lb} ^{lc} ^{ld} ^{le} ^{lf} ^{lg} ^{lh} ^{li} ^{lj} ^{lk} ^{ll} ^{lm} ^{ln} ^{lo} ^{lp} ^{lq} ^{lr} ^{ls} ^{lt} ^{lu} ^{lv} ^{lw} ^{lx} ^{ly} ^{lz} ^{ma} ^{mb} ^{mc} ^{md} ^{me} ^{mf} ^{mg} ^{mh} ^{mi} ^{mj} ^{mk} ^{ml} ^{mm} ^{mn} ^{mo} ^{mp} ^{mq} ^{mr} ^{ms} ^{mt} ^{mu} ^{mv} ^{mw} ^{mx} ^{my} ^{mz} ^{na} ^{nb} ^{nc} nd ^{ne} ^{nf} ^{ng} ^{nh} ⁿⁱ ^{nj} ^{nk} ^{nl} ^{nm} ⁿⁿ ^{no} ^{np} ^{nq} ^{nr} ^{ns} ^{nt} ^{nu} ^{nv} ^{nw} ^{nx} ^{ny} ^{nz} ^{oa} ^{ob} ^{oc} ^{od} ^{oe} ^{of} ^{og} ^{oh} ^{oi} ^{oj} ^{ok} ^{ol} ^{om} ^{on} ^{oo} ^{op} ^{oq} ^{or} ^{os} ^{ot} ^{ou} ^{ov} ^{ow} ^{ox} ^{oy} ^{oz} ^{pa} ^{pb} ^{pc} ^{pd} ^{pe} ^{pf} ^{pg} ^{ph} ^{pi} ^{pj} ^{pk} ^{pl} ^{pm} ^{pn} ^{po} ^{pp} ^{pq} ^{pr} ^{ps} ^{pt} ^{pu} ^{pv} ^{pw} ^{px} ^{py} ^{pz} ^{qa} ^{qb} ^{qc} ^{qd} ^{qe} ^{qf} ^{qg} ^{qh} ^{qi} ^{qj} ^{qk} ^{ql} ^{qm} ^{qn} ^{qo} ^{qp} ^{qq} ^{qr} ^{qs} ^{qt} ^{qu} ^{qv} ^{qw} ^{qx} ^{qy} ^{qz} ^{ra} ^{rb} ^{rc} rd ^{re} ^{rf} ^{rg} ^{rh} ^{ri} ^{rj} ^{rk} ^{rl} ^{rm} ^{rn} ^{ro} ^{rp} ^{rq} ^{rr} ^{rs} ^{rt} ^{ru} ^{rv} ^{rw} ^{rx} ^{ry} ^{rz} ^{sa} ^{sb} ^{sc} ^{sd} ^{se} ^{sf} ^{sg} ^{sh} ^{si} ^{sj} ^{sk} ^{sl} sm ^{sn} ^{so} ^{sp} ^{sq} ^{sr} ^{ss} st ^{su} ^{sv} ^{sw} ^{sx} ^{sy} ^{sz} ^{ta} ^{tb} ^{tc} ^{td} ^{te} ^{tf} ^{tg} th ^{ti} ^{tj} ^{tk} ^{tl} tm ^{tn} ^{to} ^{tp} ^{tr} ^{ts} ^{tt} ^{tu} ^{tv} ^{tw} ^{tx} ^{ty} ^{tz} ^{ua} ^{ub} ^{uc} ^{ud} ^{ue} ^{uf} ^{ug} ^{uh} ^{ui} ^{uj} ^{uk} ^{ul} ^{um} ^{un} ^{uo} ^{up} ^{uq} ^{ur} ^{us} ^{ut} ^{uu} ^{uv} ^{uw} ^{ux} ^{uy} ^{uz} ^{va} ^{vb} ^{vc} ^{vd} ^{ve} ^{vf} ^{vg} ^{vh} ^{vi} ^{vj} ^{vk} ^{vl} ^{vm} ^{vn} ^{vo} ^{vp} ^{vq} ^{vr} ^{vs} ^{vt} ^{vu} ^{vv} ^{vw} ^{vx} ^{vy} ^{vz} ^{wa} ^{wb} ^{wc} ^{wd} ^{we} ^{wf} ^{wg} ^{wh} ^{wi} ^{wj} ^{wk} ^{wl} ^{wm} ^{wn} ^{wo} ^{wp} ^{wq} ^{wr} ^{ws} ^{wt} ^{wu} ^{wv} ^{ww} ^{wx} ^{wy} ^{wz} ^{xa} ^{xb} ^{xc} ^{xd} ^{xe} ^{xf} ^{fg} ^{xh} ^{xi} ^{xj} ^{xk} ^{xl} ^{xm} ^{xn} ^{xo} ^{xp} ^{xq} ^{xr} ^{xs} ^{xt} ^{xu} ^{xv} ^{xw} ^{xx} ^{xy} ^{xz} ^{ya} ^{yb} ^{yc} ^{yd} ^{ye} ^{yf} ^{yg} ^{yh} ^{yi} ^{yj} ^{yk} ^{yl} ^{ym} ^{yn} ^{yo} ^{yp} ^{yq} ^{yr} ^{ys} ^{yt} ^{yu} ^{yv} ^{yw} ^{yz} ^{za} ^{zb} ^{zc} ^{zd} ^{ze} ^{zf} ^{zg} ^{zh} ^{zi} ^{zj} ^{zk} ^{zl} ^{zm} ^{zn} ^{zo} ^{zp} ^{zq} ^{zr} ^{zs} ^{zt} ^{zu} ^{zv} ^{zw} ^{zx} ^{zy} ^{zz}

V. 24—41.

It has often happened that they pretend most zeal for the glory of God, who are most assiduous in dishonouring Christ: "but he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father that sent him." When a believer knows not how to answer the objections and arguments of enemies to the truth, he may have recourse to his own experience: one thing he knows, that "whereas he was blind, now "he sees;" and what he has discovered of the glory of God, the evil of sin, the depravity of his own heart, the preciousness of Christ, the beauty of holiness, so evinces to him the truth of the Gospel, that no arguments can answer "this witness in himself." How little ought we to regard the contempt and revilings of proud unbelievers, though most eminent among men, when the holy Jesus was reviled by a convention of Jewish priests and rulers as a notorious sinner, and the Lord of glory was disdained as most base and vile! But how unbecoming are such revilings, especially in those who are of superior rank and education! Plain unlettered sense will often go further in understanding the most important matters, than all the advantages of science, which often render men too self-sufficient to judge of them aright. Our God, who heareth the repenting sinner's cry, will not regard those that go on still in their wickedness: but when we desire and aim to do his will, he answers our prayers, and employs us in his service. When arguments fail pertinacious disputers, they commonly have recourse to abuse; and many show their pride and folly, by refusing to hear sober sense and sound argument from their supposed inferiors, and by answering with contempt and upbraids. But Jesus will show himself peculiarly attentive to those who are suffering for his sake: they who act conscientiously and boldly, according to their present measure of knowledge, shall be led forward; and the more they know of Christ, the greater honour they will render to him. Thus the Lord gives eyes to the blind, and closes the minds of proud boasters. Conscious humble ignorance dwells nearer the porch of wisdom than arrogant genius and science. If a man be "wise in his own conceit, there is more hope of a fool than of him;" and none are in more danger than such as exclaim "Are we blind also?" For numbers of this character will perish under the aggravated guilt of "loving darkness and hating the light, because their deeds are evil."

means and instruments as men despise: thus the captious and scornful exclude themselves, while the humble believe, obey, and obtain the blessing. Those calamities which are generally thought to be tokens of the divine displeasure, and inseparable from misery, often prove the occasions of special good, and evidences of the Lord's distinguishing favour. The man born blind rejoices, and will rejoice for ever, in having, by means of that heavy affliction, been brought to know and love the holy Jesus; in the honour of his beloved Saviour, which was thus displayed; and in the important benefits, which multitudes, in every subsequent age, have derived from this instructive narrative.—But, on the other hand, what numbers make so perverse and mischievous an use of their limbs, senses, and faculties, even to the end of life, that they might desperately wish for ever, that they had been born, and lived all their days, blind, deaf, dumb, lame, nay, even idiots or lunatics! They, whose eyes are opened, and whose hearts are cleansed by his effectual grace, are the same men, yet new creatures; and, being known in the identity of their persons and the contrariety of their characters, they live monuments to the Redeemer's glory, and continually recommend his grace to all who desire the same precious salvation.

V. 13—23.

How perfect in wisdom and holiness was our Redeemer, when enemies like his could find no flaw, and were driven to the necessity of renewing against him the repeatedly refuted charge of breaking the sabbath! May we thus be enabled "by well-doing to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." The most illiterate and poor, who are simple-hearted, readily draw proper conclusions from the evidences afforded them of the truth of the Gospel: but they, whose interests and inclination lie another way, though "ever learning, will never be able to come to the knowledge of the truth." Religious persecutions can only make men cowards or hypocrites, and suppress investigation, or an avowal of sentiments; and even the censures of the Church have too often been levelled against her best friends. But no terror should induce us to conceal our obligations to the Lord; and what men generally term prudence and caution, in this case, is unbelief, ingratitude, and base fear of reproach and the cross.

b 14 27 Ex
xxiii. 17. Phil.
iv. 3. 2 Tim. ii.
19. Rev. xix. 15.
1 Ps. xxiii. 2, 3. out.

4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, ^a he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; ^b for they know his voice.

5 And ^c a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: ^d

but ^e they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

7 Then said Jesus unto them again. Verily, verily, I say unto you, ^f I am the Door of ^g the sheep.

8 All that ever ^h come before me, are thieves and robbers: ⁱ but the sheep did not hear them.

9 I am ^j the Door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, ^k and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

NOTES.

CHAP. X. V. 1—5. This parable is an evident continuation of the former chapter: and therefore the Jewish false teachers were primarily intended by “the thieves and robbers;” but not they alone. From Jesus, “the Light of the world,” all who are instrumental in illuminating mankind derive their light; in like manner all true pastors derive their authority from him, as the chief Shepherd. Even before his appearance in the flesh, all the faithful teachers of God’s people testified of him, and directed the people to expect salvation by faith in the Redeemer that was to come. When he was on earth, the priests and scribes, if they had been such shepherds as God approved, would have imitated John Baptist, and borne testimony to him as the Son of God and the Saviour of men. So that in every age of the Church, a regard to Christ, as the Source of authority, and the Subject and Object of their ministry, has been the grand criterion of faithful pastors. The priests and scribes demanded of Jesus by what authority he acted? supposing that he ought to have taken out a commission *from them*; but he here intimated that they were deceivers, who had received no commission or instructions *from him*, the great Proprietor of the flock: yet the priests held their office by divine institution, and the Scribes and Pharisees were the acknowledged teachers of the people, though it is doubtful whether they were, by any divine appointment, set apart to that office. Christ himself, however, is the Door by whom all true pastors enter into the Church, to exercise their function. They believe in him for their own salvation, and receive from him those peculiar dispositions and endowments, which fit them for their work: and they aim to glorify him and to do good to souls; preferring this service to more creditable and lucrative employments, and being prepared to suffer hardship of every kind in performing it. Thus they enter by the Door into the sheepfold, (7:) but all, who intrude into the pastoral office without these views, dispositions, and purposes, (which are so many credentials from Christ, that he hath sent the man who possesses them,) climb up by some other way, abusing human appointments though good in themselves, and even divine institutions, to subvert their love of ease, wealth, authority, or reputation; and employing the influence of rich and powerful connexions, or that acquired by natural abilities and human learning, as a passport into stations in the Church, for which they have not one correspondent

disposition or qualification. Such men, like the priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, in our Lord’s time, are thieves and robbers, who enter the fold in an unauthorized manner, to fleece or butcher, not to feed, the flock; who rob Christ of his honour, and starve the souls of his people, in order to enrich themselves and aggrandize their families. But to them, who enter with a due regard to Christ, and with proper desires and intentions, “the Porter openeth;” that is, God, in his providence and by his Spirit, makes way for them successfully to exercise their ministry: and the sheep of Christ, or true believers, hear their voice, and receive the truth from them. And as in those eastern regions the Sheep, when led forth from the fold to the pasture, followed the Shepherd, when they heard his well-known voice and saw him going before them; so these pastors get acquainted with the people committed to their care, and lead them by their instructions into the knowledge of the truth, and into the ways of peace and holiness: they walk before them by their example; and the people follow them with confidence, as they know and experience their doctrine to be good, and their exhortations salutary. But the sheep will not follow those, who are strangers to them, to Christ, and to his truth, but will flee from them, fearing lest they should be deceived, and not finding their doctrine suited to their wants and experience, or level to their capacities.

V. 6—9. Though our Lord evidently meant, by this parable, to expose the ignorant, mercenary, and oppressive rulers and teachers of the Jewish Church, and to contrast their character with that of faithful pastors, yet the Pharisees were so blinded by pride, that they understood not the drift of his discourse. He was therefore pleased to explain himself more fully, by solemnly assuring them, that he was “the Door of the Sheep.” No man ever entered into the *true Church*, except by faith in him; though many others have been externally admitted into the *visible Church*: in like manner, no man ever was a true minister of religion, who was not commissioned and instructed by Christ; though many have a regular external appointment to the office, who are strangers to him, and have no regard to him, and whom he doth not accept. By those, “who came before Christ,” we must not understand those prophets or faithful teachers who came before his incarnation; for these acted by his authority, and were his representatives. But all those, who came with pretensions of being the promised Messiah, or who

16. v. 25. xlii.
 3. Matt. vii.
 3. Acts i. 21.
 Heb. vi. 7. 8.
 Rev. vi. 9.
 3. 11. Matt. vii.
 24. xvi. 27.
 Luke xii. 27.
 1. Cor. vii. 9.
 Gal. i. 2.
 Tit. i. 10.
 vii. 31. v. 21. Luke x. 26. xxi. 22. 1. 8. xxi. 21. Mark
 25. xxi. 2. 3. Rom. v. 21. vi. 21. 1. Tim. i. 16. 1. John ii. 25. v. 13. 50. June 21. — 8. vi.
 13. v. 10. v. 21. v. 25. 40. xiv. 19. 1. Sam. ii. 9. Jer. xxi. 3. Ps. xxxvi. 26. ciii. 17. 18.
 cxvii. 1. 2. Prov. iv. 16. xxi. 16. 14. xiv. 17. 19. 3. Jer. xxxi. 3. 1. xxi. 40. 2. xxi. 40.
 Mark xii. 28. Rom. v. 2. 9. 10. 17. vi. 1. 25. 39. 39. Phil. i. 6. Col. iv. 3. 4. 2. The
 13. 13. 1. 1. Pet. v. 5. 1. John v. 19. v. 13. 13. June 1. 24. — 1. xvi. 11. 12. Deut. xxxiii.
 2. Ps. xxi. 5. Luke xxi. 31. 32. xxi. 46. Acts vii. 52. 2. Tim. i. 12. Heb. vi. 22.

are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.
 27 My 'sheep hear my voice,' and I know them,^a and they follow me:

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither

shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

29 My Father, ^m which gave them me, ⁿ is greater than all: and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

30 I and my Father are one.

31 Then ^p the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

xi. 9. Ex. xvii. 4. 1. Sam. xxx. 6. Matt. xxi. 35. xxi. 35. Acts vii. 52. 58, 59.

V. 26—31. To this our Lord replied, that he had already told them who he was, but they had not believed in him; though the works that he did in the name of the Father, and as an appeal to him, sufficiently authenticated his pretensions. The true reason why they did not believe him, was the want of that simple, teachable, and inoffensive temper, which characterized his sheep; for not being of that *chosen* remnant, they were left to the pride and enmity of their carnal hearts, and therefore no evidence could convince them. On the contrary, his sheep, being taught and drawn of God, heard, believed, and obeyed his word: they were known and approved of by him, and they followed him as his faithful disciples: to them he gave eternal life; nor should one of them perish to all eternity, through any outward temptation, or inward evil propensity; neither should Satan, or any enemy, pluck them out of his hands; (*Deut. xxxiii. 3.*) As his Father who gave them to him, that he might ransom and save them, was greater than any and all the creatures in the universe, so that none could pluck them out of his almighty hands; and as he and the Father were One, One Thing, One Being, (*numen*, *Ōum*), it is the neuter gender: One in essence, will, and operation. The conclusion, which our Lord drew from this declaration, that being one with the omnipotent Father, he was able to defend his sheep against all enemies, sufficiently proves that he meant to claim divine power and perfection, equally with the Father that sent him. The Jews well understood the extent of his claim; and therefore deeming it blasphemy, (as it certainly would have been in any mere man,) they prepared immediately to stone him: and their *conduct* is a good exposition of his words. The doctrine of the preservation of all true believers, from every enemy, and through all dangers and temptations, to the full enjoyment of eternal life, seems to be taught in these verses with the greatest decision. "I give them eternal life," "they shall never perish," or "not perish for ever." Now, if any of them come short of eternal life, and actually and eternally perish, how can these testimonies be true? Will not the Saviour's words pass away? (*Matt. xxiv. 35.*) "That is, through any defect on my part;" Or Christ may speak here of sheep, *continuing so to the death.* (*Whilby.*) This means that they shall not perish, except by their own fault. Now if such a condition was implied, in this and similar Scriptures, (which must be supposed by those who deny the doctrine in question,) why is it never once hinted? The margin will furnish the reader with a considerable number of texts to the same purpose; but in which of them is this condition so much as alluded to? On the contrary, in some of them,

the grand objection, arising from the supposition of their wilful apostacy, is expressly obviated; "I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." "They shall not come into condemnation." "Though they fall, they shall not be utterly cast down." Can we then reasonably suppose, that a condition was implied in all these texts, a condition of infinite importance to us, and yet that not the smallest intimation of it was given in any one of them? Could this be done by design? Or could it possibly be an oversight? Or was the case so obvious, that no caution or warning was at all requisite? It was indeed of considerable importance for our Lord, in his circumstances, to declare 'his ability and readiness' to save all such as should persevere in believing on him: but his words are calculated to convey far more than this assurance; and *persevere in believing* must be added to them, before they can be limited to it. And where is the confidence of a believer to be placed, that he shall *persevere* in believing? Must he trust in the strength of his own resolution? on the constancy of his will? on his experienced superiority to temptation? That is, shall he "trust in his own heart?" For his confidence, as to *perseverance to the end in believing*, must be placed, either on the truth, love, and power of Christ, on the supposition that he has promised to preserve the true believer; or on his own heart, at least conjointly with Christ, if all the promises to this effect be *conditional*. On the other hand, if we have for a long time persevered in believing, may we take the credit of it to ourselves? Or ought we to ascribe all the glory of it to the Lord alone? When Adam fell, it was not against his will, or without his own fault; yet he was overcome, and enslaved, and ruined, and must have perished, with his race, had not Christ interposed; and could the true believer, though by his own fault, thus be plucked out of the hands of Christ, and *finally* perish, the enemy would triumph over the second Adam, in some respects, as he did over the first. Indeed, there can be no sin, except where the will consents; or any conceivable way by which our great enemy, or any of his servants, whether heretics, persecutors, or tempters, of whatever description, can pluck us out of Christ's hand, by an act of violence, or without our own fault. It is said, 'Where do we learn this, except from such passages as that under consideration?' But, in fact, we learn it, not so much from any particular text, as from the general tenour of Scripture, and our own most obvious notions of right and wrong. Man had not fallen, had he not consented to the temptation, though it had been possible to have forced the forbidden fruit on him. When Satan "desired to have Peter, to sift him as wheat," our

q 25. 27. v. 19, 20.
25. Matt. xi. 5.
Act. i. 22. x 38
1 Sam. xix. 4-6
2 Chr. xxiv.
20-22. Ps. xxxv.
12 cix. 4. 5. Ec.
12. 4. 1 John. ii.
19.

xxviii 32. Lev.
xxiv 14-16
1 Kings. xli. 13.
4. 50. 4. 16 Phil.
ii. 6.
U. N. 31. xv. 25.
Rom. ii. 10-19.
12. 1. xxviii. 1. 9-10.

Y. Ex. ix. 16. vii. y.
1. xxi. 20. Ps.
cxviii. 1.
2 Gen. xv. 1.
Deut. xviii. 15.
18-20. 1 Sam.
xiv. 26. 37. xv.
1. xxiii. 9-11.
18-20. 1 Sam.
xiv. 26. 37. xv.
1. xxiii. 9-11.
18-20. 1 Sam.
xiv. 26. 37. xv.
1. xxiii. 9-11.

xxiv. 26. 37. 44-46. Acts i. 16.

32 Jesus answered them, ^a Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; ^b for which of those works do ye stone me?

33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not, ^b but for blasphemy; and because that thou, ^c being a man, ^d makest thyself God.

34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written ^a in your law, ^x I said, Ye are gods?

35 If he called them gods, ^z unto whom the word of God came, and ^a the scripture cannot be broken;

Lord said. "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." His *perseverance in believing* therefore, was ensured by Christ's intercession. The event was *certain*, but the exhortation to watch and pray was not superfluous; for had Peter regarded it, he would have escaped unspeakable anguish. Now if Peter's perseverance in believing was secured by our Lord's intercession, is it not most obvious, with such Scriptures before us as that under consideration, to suppose that our perseverance in believing is secured in the same way? And that we are assured of it by express promises, as he was? That is, provided we are true believers. The warnings and exhortations, which many object to this doctrine, as if nugatory, on the supposition that it is true, are of different sorts. Some are suited to stir up professed Christians to examine whether they have the true faith or not. This may be distinguished from a dead faith, not only by its other fruits; but by standing the trials, which cause many to fall away, having no root in themselves. "Continue in my word." "Abide in me." "He that continueth to the end shall be saved." "That on the good ground are they, which, in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with *patience*." These guard the doctrine from *abuse*, and tend to exclude presumption. Others are suited to stir up believers to "give all diligence to make their calling and election sure," and "to possess the full assurance of hope unto the end;" that, knowing their own safety and happiness, they may be the more joyful, and thankful, and cheerful, in self-denying services and sharp afflictions. There are also such as call them to the use of those means, by which it is the will of God to preserve them. Thus the apostle assured his companions in danger, "that there should be no loss of any man's life;" yet he afterwards said, "except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved;" for that was the method, in which it was the will of God to save them. And others are intended to put believers on their guard against those temptations, which, if listened to, would not only greatly distress and injure them; but also hinder their usefulness, disgrace their profession, dishonour God, and do unspeakable evil to their brethren and neighbours. And, though a man were most fully assured that he should not be killed by falling from a precipice; there might yet be sufficient reason to warn him to *beware*; for broken bones and

36 Say ye of him, ^b whom the Father hath sanctified, ^c and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, ^d I am the Son of God?

37 If ^a I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, ^f believe the works: ^a that ye may know and believe that the Father *is* in me, and I in him.

39 Therefore ^b they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand,

g 30. xiv. 9-11. 20. xvii. 11. 21-28. ---h 31. vii. 30. 41. viii. 53. Luke xvi. 23. 30.

b. iii. 34. vi. 27.
Ps. ii. 6-12.
Is. xli. 2-5. vii.
1. xlii. 1-6.
3. Iv. 4. 5. lxi. 1-3.
Jer. i. 5.
c. iii. 17. v. 30. vi.
38. 39. 57. viii.
42. xvi. 4. 5.
18. 21. Rom.
vii. 2. Gal. iv.
1. 1 John. iv.
14.
d. 30-33. v. 17.
18. 19. 35-37.
xix. 7. xx. 20.
31. Matt. xxvi.
68-69. xxviii.
43. 54. Rom. i.
4. 18. 5.
e. 25. 32. v. 23.
xii. 37. 40. 42.
1. Matt. xi. 29.

f. 15. 2. 35. A. 18.
3. 12. iv. 8-12.
xxiv. 23.

various dreadful effects may follow, should be heedlessly fall down, though by a miracle his life should be preserved.

In fine, it cannot be said to be impossible, that Christ should engage, not only to take care of his sheep, while they persevere in believing, but also to ensure their perseverance, and to secure them from final apostasy, or from dying impenitent and unbelieving. Now can any man convey this meaning in clearer, and more determinate and more emphatical language, than that contained in these verses, and the texts referred to in the margin? But if any think that the doctrine is of such a nature, that no words can prove it, do they not lean to their own understandings, instead of simply crediting the word of God?

V. 32-39. When Jesus saw the fury of the Jews, he calmly inquired, for which of his numerous and beneficent miracles they were about to put him to death? To this they replied, that it was not for a good work, but for blasphemy, that they meant to stone him; as he, who was evidently a man, spoke as if he were the almighty God. This was a fair inference from his words, and he did not charge them with misrepresenting them; yet his answer has been thought to militate against this interpretation; but let us carefully consider it. Magistrates are in Scripture called gods: (*Marg. Ref.*) this is commonly explained of their *authority*, by which they were the representatives of God to the people: but the title is not expressly given to any but rulers in Israel, who were the delegates and types of the Messiah, the Lord and King of Israel from the beginning; and on this account especially they were thus dignified. If then there was any propriety in calling them gods, "to whom the word of God came," (*Marg. Ref.*) it must arise from their relation to the promised Messiah: and it had a meaning, which could not be broken or invalidated. They were the *Lord's anointed*, as types of his great *anointed One*: had he not been truly God, they had not typically been called gods. What right, therefore, had the Jews to say to him, (whom the Father had separated, and consecrated from the beginning, to be the anointed King upon his holy hill of Zion, and at length sent into the world,) "Thou blasphemest," because he declared himself to be the Son of God? The Messiah was evidently predicted under this title, (*Ps. ii. 7.*) He was the Messiah, and therefore the Son of God, and one with the Father. It is not to be supposed, that the Jews fully

1. 28. iii. 26.
 xli. i. xi. 54.
 iii. 26. Matt. iv.
 24-25. Mark i.
 37. Luke v. 1.
 xli. 1.

40 And went away again beyond Jordan, into ¹ the place where John at first baptized; ^k and there he abode.

41 And ¹ many resorted unto him, and

comprehended this reasoning, yet they understood more than they could answer. Nor would it follow from it, as hath been argued, that all, who in Scripture are called gods, were types of Christ; for Satan, who is called the god of this world, and the idols of the Gentiles, were not dignified with this title, as the anointed rulers of Israel were, but exposed to execration, as contemptible and hateful usurpers. It cannot be denied, that the most wicked of the high-priests were types of Christ, our great High-Priest: why then should it be doubted, whether the wicked kings and rulers of Israel were types of Christ our King? To this our Lord added, that the Jews might have some reason for not believing him, if he did not the works of his Father, that is, such as evinced almighty power: but if he performed such works, though they disregarded his testimony, let them not despise his credentials, or refuse to believe his union with the Father, and that mutual in-dwelling of which he spake. This again excited the Jews against him, as it confirmed their former inference from his words; but he was pleased to evade their malice at that time also. "When magistrates are in Scripture called gods, the Holy Ghost still addeth something, which excludes them from a true divinity; as that "they shall die like men," or they are "rulers of the people." "Whereas, when Christ is called God, it is either with some epithet belonging to the supreme God, as "God over all;" "The great God;" "The true God;" or with the addition of some operation proper to God, as when it is said, "The word was God, and all things were made by him." (*Whitby*.) The word *law* is in a general sense used for *Scripture*, as in some other places. (*Marg. Ref.*) (*Note, Ps. cxix. 1.*) The emphatical clause, "The Scripture cannot be broken," is a decisive testimony of our Lord to the divine inspiration of the Old Testament.

V. 40—42. Many, who had formerly heard John's testimony to Christ, and perhaps had almost forgotten it, now beholding his miracles and hearing his instructions, were convinced that he was the Messiah, and became his disciples. John was a prophet, and more than a prophet; yet he wrought no miracles; so that miracles are not in all cases necessary to a true prophet.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—8.

It is peculiarly incumbent on all who enter into the sacred ministry, or officiate in it, to scrutinize with rigour their own motives and principles, and the tendency of their doctrine and example. By whatever external way men obtain admission into this sacred function, unless they enter by "Christ the Door," unless their disposition, conduct, and instructions, authorize the conclusion that he hath sent them, they will have a dreadful account to give of the emoluments and distinctions which they now so eagerly hunt after, or ostentatiously glory in, when it shall be proved that they have seized on those advantages,

said, "John did no miracle: " but all things that John spake of this man were true.

42 And ^o many believed on him there.

m Matt. xiv. 2.
 Luke vi. 26—29.
 m i. 29. 33. 34.
 iii. 29—36. Luke
 xvi. 29. 30.
 o ii. 23. iv. 39. 41.
 xiii. 30. xl. 45.
 xii. 42.

to which they had no right, and grown rich by an office, in which they had neither knowledge, integrity, humility, nor industry to do good. But happy is that pastor, whom the Saviour teaches and employs; who is himself a true Christian; who regards the honour of Christ, the conversion of sinners, and the edification of believers, more than any secular advantage whatsoever; and who can say to his people "I seek not yours, but you." To him the Lord will open a door of utterance; seals shall be given to his ministry; believers will approve and encourage his labours; and his work will be its own reward; whilst he gets acquainted with his people, attends to the case of each of them, leads them forward in the knowledge, experience, and practice of the Gospel, and goes before them in every good work. Every man who values his own soul, should avoid those who intrude into the ministry, when they are strangers to Christ and the experimental knowledge of his salvation; and when their example and doctrine prove them hirelings, who care not for the sheep. Indeed the true people of God will flee from such teachers; for they know not the voice of strangers: and for this they will be reproached by those who, like these Jews, understand not this parable. Such men would think those persons very imprudent, who should trust their health to some ignorant empiric, or their estate to a dishonest lawyer, merely because he happened to live in the same street, town, or village: yet they suppose it incumbent on them to follow the instructions of a man, who neither knows nor cares any thing about vital godliness, if he be the minister of the parish, or of some neighbouring congregation! Alas, how much more sagacious are men, in their temporal than in their eternal concerns!

V. 9—21.

Christ himself is not only the Source of authority to all pastors, but the good Shepherd, and the perfect model, according to which they should be formed, and by which their pretensions must be decided. He came, that sinners "might have life, and have it more abundantly;" for their good he became poor, he abased himself, he laboured, he agonized, and died! Whilst we admire and adore his infinite condescension and compassion, and his unspeakable love to such vile rebels and enemies; let us inquire which professed pastors of his Church are most like him? Are they, who rise from obscurity to wealth, grandeur, and luxury by the sacred ministry, but who leave the poor of the flock, and every thing that requires labour, condescension, or self-denial, to others; perhaps without much inquiry into their principles or characters, and without knowing whether they too be not hirelings of an inferior order? Does this, alas! too common procedure, resemble the conduct of the good Shepherd? Or rather is it not a perfect contrast to it? And, whatever indignation it may excite, such men must be told, that they are thieves and robbers: they only want the persecuting

CHAP. XI.

Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, is sick, 1, 2. They send to Jesus, who, declaring his "sickness not unto death, "but for the glory of God," abides two days where he was, 3—6. He informs the disciples that Lazarus was dead; and intimating that he would raise him to life, he proposes going to him; the disciples, fearing the Jews, express their surprise, yet resolve to accompany him, 7—16. Jesus arrives at Bethany, after Lazarus had been dead four days, 17, 18. He assures Martha, that her brother shall rise again, and requires her to believe, that he is the Resurrection and the Life, and she confesses her faith in him

as Christ, the Son of God, 19—27. She calls Mary, who comes with her, 28—31. Jesus sympathizing with the mourners, groans in spirit, and weeps, and the remarks of the Jews on the occasion, 32—37. He comes to the grave, appeals to God, as his Father who sent him, and calls Lazarus out of the grave, &c. 38—44. Many Jews believe; but some inform the Pharisees, 45, 46. They hold a council; and concur with Caiaphas, who instigates them to put Jesus to death; while, as high priest, Caiaphas was led to prophesy, concerning the gracious intention and extensive efficacy of his death, 47—53. He retires from places of public resort, 54. Before the passover, the Jews inquire

spirit, to complete their likeness to those who "came not "but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy:" and this exemption is often the effect rather of want of power than want of will. However, as one observes, "Such a minister carries a shroud with him, of those who have perished in ignorance through his neglect, or of those who have been hardened in sins through his ill example." (Bp. Burnett.) But let such of us be thankful, as have been preserved, or recovered, from such a state; and let us pray for others, who are still blinded and deluded. Let all who have entered the sacred ministry from carnal motives, and in an unholly manner, pause and consider their awful case; that, by deep repentance and faith in Christ, becoming his true disciples, they may be commissioned, and instructed, by him, to exercise their ministry in a better manner than they entered upon it. And let all, who desire to be faithful ministers, study and copy Christ's example, that they may grow more willing to labour and suffer for the good of that flock, for which he shed his precious blood; that they may mortify every covetous, ambitious, selfish, and sensual desire; and lay aside all sloth, pride, false delicacy, fear of men, and whatever else can render them unwilling to "spend and be spent "for the people." We all should have our desires fixed upon those who are not yet brought into the fold of Christ, but are scattered abroad in this evil world, and should endeavour that they too may be led to hear the Saviour's voice, and become the sheep of his pasture: and if our zeal and earnestness in so blessed a work should bring upon us the reproach of being designing hypocrites, ignorant enthusiasts, or even mad fanatics, we may remember, that our holy Lord and Master was thus vilified before us.

V. 22—41.

Let sinners also hearken to him, who says "I am the "Door." They can now have no access into the favour of God, or hereafter into heaven, except they believe in

him. But he will admit all who apply to him, and guard and nourish their souls unto everlasting life. The proud, the malicious, and all who are not Christ's sheep, will be convinced by no evidence, and take no warning: but his sheep, when he comes forth to seek and save them, hear his voice, and follow his guidance and example; and thus they become like the harmless, holy, patient Lamb of God. These he knows, and they know him: they "love "him, because he hath first loved them:" they seek his glory, and he takes care of their interests. He gives them eternal life, and keeps them in his almighty hands to the enjoyment of it; nor shall any enemy, or any event, ever separate them from his love. "They know in whom they have believed:" their "Redeemer is the LORD of "Hosts." "God is become their Salvation;" *ЖЕНОТАН*, Jesus, is their good Shepherd, being One with the Father, and possessed with him of all divine power and perfection. They cannot expect too much from him, to whom all the prophets bear witness, of 'whom the priests and kings of Israel were types and delegates, "whom all angels worshipped," and "who upholds all things by the word of his "power." His works proclaim him "God over all, "blessed for evermore;" that all men may know, and believe that he is in the Father, and the Father in him. Modern opposers, who charge us with idolatry for worshipping the Son of God, would doubtless have dared to charge him with blasphemy, had they heard these discourses: but he will refute such charges, and silence such enemies: they can only deprive themselves of the blessings of his salvation; and provoke him to bid them "Depart "from him," when he shall come to judge the world. But he continues to send his Gospel to others, that will receive it. These are frequently the poor, the illiterate, and the obscure of the world; whilst the wise, the learned, the wealthy, and the honourable, despise his salvation: and the effects of the testimony, which faithful ministers have borne to him, sometimes do not much appear, till they have entered into their rest; and then they spring up, and bring forth a blessed harvest, to the glory of God, and the salvation of many precious souls.

about him; the rulers having given orders to apprehend him, 55—57.

NOW a certain man ^a was sick, named ^b Lazarus, of ^c Bethany, the town of ^d Mary and her sister Martha.

2 (It was ^e that Mary which ^f anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, ^g he whom thou lovest is sick.

4 When Jesus heard that, he said, ^h This sickness is not unto death, but ⁱ for the glory of God, ^k that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

5 Now Jesus ^l loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, ^m he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

7 Then after that saith he to ⁿ his disciples, ^o let us go into Judea again.

8 His disciples say unto him, Master, ^p the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

9 Jesus answered, ^q Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, ^r he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

10 But if ^s a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

11 These things said he: and after that, ^t he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus ^u sleepeth; but I go that I may ^v awake him out of sleep.

12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep he shall do well.

13 Howbeit, Jesus spake of his death: but they thought he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

14 Then said Jesus unto them ^w plainly, Lazarus is dead.

15 And ^x I am glad ^y for your sakes that I was not there, ^z to the intent ye

NOTES.

CHAP. XI. V. 1—6. (Notes, Luke x. 38—41.) Lazarus seems to have been a young man at this time, and to have lived single with his sisters. They formed a very harmonious, pious, and happy family; and Jesus seems to have constantly resorted to their house, when he went to Jerusalem. Bethany is called "the town of Martha and Mary," because they resided, and probably had their inheritance, there: but, though they were persons well known and respected, yet there is no probability in the opinion, that the whole village belonged to them. The evangelist distinguished the Mary of whom he wrote from others of the same name, by referring to an action of her's recorded by two of the other sacred historians, and which he was about to mention. (Marg. Ref. Note, Luke vii. 37, 38.) Lazarus, being dangerously ill, his sisters sent word to Jesus, who was at a distance, simply stating that "he whom he loved was sick." They knew that this would sufficiently determine whom they meant, and comprise every topic which could be urged for his gracious interposition: and probably they expected he would come without delay to heal him. When Jesus heard this message, he said to his disciples, perhaps in the hearing of the messenger, "this sickness was not unto death;" (it was not intended finally to remove Lazarus out of the world;) "But for the glory of God," in a wonderful display of the divine power of his beloved Son, by the miracle to which it would give occasion. This was evidently our Lord's meaning: but the messenger would not so understand it; and the expectation which perhaps it excited, would add to the trial of the faith of all concerned, when the death of Lazarus seemed to preclude every hope. Our Lord loved each person in this favoured family, both

as true disciples, and as his most affectionate and intimate friends: yet he remained where he was two whole days after he received the tidings of Lazarus's sickness; whereas we should have supposed that he would have gone at once to Bethany; but his love was directed by consummate wisdom. "When God at any time seems to delay in assisting us, he consults both his own glory and our benefit, as the event shows." (Beza.) "Jesus did not come to Bethany till Lazarus had been dead four days; not only that the miracle of his resurrection might be the greater, but also that all pretence of his being only 'in a deliquium', (or apparently dead) might be taken away." (Whitby.)

V. 7—10. When our Lord intimated his purpose of returning into Judea, his disciples were surprised. They deemed those unworthy of his presence, who had attempted his life; or, rather, they doubted whether he would be able to protect himself and them from the rage of such powerful enemies. His answer implied, that he should certainly be safe, and ought to be employed, during the appointed period of his life; and when that was expired, he must be delivered into the hands of his enemies; even as men labour and travel securely, whilst the sun affords them his light, but are liable to fall into a pit, or down a precipice, if they travel in the night. "Because there is no light in him," or, in it, that is, the world in which he walks. The Jews divided the time of the sun's being above the horizon into twelve hours; and their days were much nearer the same length in summer and winter, than they are in these northerly regions. "This alone is the safe and right way of life, intrepidity to follow God, calling us, and shining on our path, amidst the darkness of this world." (Beza.)

may believe; nevertheless, let us go unto him.

16 Then said ^b Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, ^c Let us also go, that we may die with him.

17 ¶ Then, when Jesus came, he found that he had *lain* in the grave ^d four days already.

18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about * fifteen furlongs off.

19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, ^e to comfort them concerning their brother.

20 Then Martha, ^f as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat *still* in the house.

21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, ^g if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

22 But I know, ^h that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, ⁱ God will give *it* thee.

23 Jesus saith unto her, ^k Thy brother shall rise again.

24 Martha saith unto him, ^l I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25 Jesus said unto her, ^m I am the Resurrection and ⁿ the Life: ^o he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live;

26 And ^p whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. ^q Believest thou this?

27 She saith unto him, ^r Yea, Lord: ^s I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, ^t which should come into the world.

b. xi. 21-29. xxi.
c. Matt. x. 37. Luke
xii. 30. Luke
xxii. 3.
d. 19. 19. Hos.
vi. 2. Acts ii. 27
-28.
e. That is, about
two miles. vi.
19. Luke xxi. 2
13. Rev. xiv. 20
xxi. 16.
f. Gen. xxviii. 35.
g. 1 Chr. vii. 21.
22. Job ii. 11.
h. 11. Ec. vii.
2. 12. 19. Jer.
xlii. 5-7. Lam.
i. 2. 9. 16. 31.
ii. 13. Rom. xiv.
15. 2 Cor. i. 4.
1. Ther. iv. 18.
-19.
i. 30. Matt. xxv.
1. 6. Acts x. 29.
xxviii. 15.
Thes. iv. 17.
2. 32. 37. iv. 47-
49. 1. Kngs vii. 18.
Pa. lxxvii.
30. 20. Matt.
ix. 18. Luke vii.
6-10. 13-15.
viii. 47-55.

h. 41. 42. ix. 30. 31.
Mark ix. 23. 24.
Heb. xii. 17-19.
101. 35. v. 22-27.
xvii. 2. Ps. lxxv.
Matt. xxviii. 18.
k. 43. 44.
l. v. 28. 29. Ps.
xvii. 15. Nix. 14.
15. 19. xxv. 9.
xxvi. 19. 22.
xxviii. 1. 10.
m. 11. 12. 13. 14.
Hos. vi. 2. xlii.
14. Matt. xxi.
23-32. Lxx.
Nix. xiv. A. 1.
xvii. 31. 32.
xxiii. 6-9. xxvii.
15. Lxx. xi. 35.
19. 21. 33. 34.
40. 44. Rom. v.
17-19. viii. 11.
1. Cor. xv. 40-
26. 43-57. 2.
Cor. iv. 11. Phil.
iii. 10. 20. 21. 1.
Thes. iv. 14. 15.
Rev. xx. 5. 10-
15. xxi. 4.
n. 1. 25. xie.
6. 19. Ps. xxxv.
9. Acts iii. 15.
Rom. viii. 2.
Col. iii. 3. 4.
1. John i. 1. 2.
v. 11. 12. Rev. xxi. 1. 17. ---o. Joh. xxi. 25-27. Luke xxi. 43. Rom. viii. 10. 11. 34. 29.
1. Cor. xv. 18. 29. 2. Cor. v. 1-8. Phil. i. 21. 1. Thes. iv. 14. Heb. xii. 12-14. 1. Tim. ii. 13. p. iii. 15.
-18. iv. 11. v. 24. vi. 50. 54-58. viii. 52. 53. x. 28. Rom. viii. 13. 1. John v. 10-12. ---p. 15.
xx. 34. 10. Matt. ix. 28. xxvi. 53. Mark ix. 23. ---r. 49. iv. 42. vi. 49. ix. 36-38. xx. 23-31. Matt. xvi. 16. Acts viii. 37. 1. John v. 1. ---s. vi. 14. Mal. iii. 1. Matt. 3. Luke
vii. 19. 20. 1. Tim. i. 15. 16. 1. John v. 20.

V. 11-16. Our Lord perfectly knew what passed at Bethany: and he spake to his disciples of the death of *their friend* Lazarus, and his being soon restored to life, under the idea of his having "fallen asleep," and being awakened from sleep. Thus he stated the fact in language that divested it of its terror; and at the same time, he spake of the miracle which he intended to perform, in the most simple and unostentatious manner. The disciples, however, did not understand him; but supposing him to mean that Lazarus was taking rest in sleep, and thinking this a favourable symptom of his recovery, they seem to have concluded that there could be no occasion for Jesus to expose himself to his enemies, by going to Bethany. He therefore plainly told them, that Lazarus was dead; and that, instead of regretting that he had not been there to recover him by miracle, he rejoiced on their account, as he meant to take occasion from thence to confirm their faith in him; but it was proper for him to go to Bethany, notwithstanding the malice of the rulers. Thomas, therefore, finding him resolved, proposed to his brethren to accompany him; though he apprehended they should be called to lay down their lives with and for him. This was the language of cordial affection, and of some faith; but combined with great ignorance, both of the power and salvation of his Lord, and of his own weakness and the deceitfulness of the human heart. Some interpret this of dying along with Lazarus: but this is very unnatural; for what special connexion had the death of Lazarus with that of the apostles? Or what need to go to Bethany, if grief for the loss of their friend would cause their death?

V. 17-19. It was customary for the Jews to inter the dead very soon after their decease: so that Lazarus was perhaps laid in the grave on the same day on which he died, (*Acts* v. 6. 10.) The two days which passed before Jesus set out on his journey, and the time employed

in travelling, prevented his arrival at Bethany, till at least four days after that event. As Bethany was scarcely two miles from Jerusalem, many Jews came from thence to condole with Martha and Mary on their loss, and to employ the customary methods and topics of consolation; and this circumstance was over-ruled to render the miracle more extensively known, and more fully attested.

V. 20-27. Martha, first hearing of our Lord's arrival, left Mary and the company, that she might meet and welcome him: and some think she wanted to inform him that many Jews were present, that he might use his discretion, whether he would go among them or not. She expressed her assurance, that he both could and would have healed her brother, if he had been on the spot; but she seems not fully to have believed, that he could have cured him at a distance, if he had pleased. She also added a confident declaration, that God would grant whatsoever he should then ask of him, for their comfort and support under the affliction: but it is rather doubtful whether this implied some feeble hope of her brother's being restored to life, or not. She, however, considered Jesus as a holy Prophet, who wrought miracles by faith and prayer, as the ancient prophets had done; rather than as the incarnate Son of God, who, being One with the Father, performed his miracles by his own omnipotence. When he assured her that Lazarus should rise again, she expressed her firm belief that he would, at the general resurrection, arise to eternal life; but intimated, that this could not make up the heavy loss which she had sustained. To enlarge her expectations, and to excite in her more honourable thoughts of him, our Lord declared himself to be "The Resurrection and the Life." In him ("the second Adam," "the Lord from heaven,") and through his mediation, all the dead shall rise again: he is the *Author* of the resurrection; it will be effected by his power; and his salvation alone will render it a blessing. In every sense he is the

28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee."

29 As soon as she had heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

31 The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary that she rose up hastily, and went out, followed her, saying, "She goeth unto the grave to weep there."

32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled;

34 And said, "Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see."

35 Jesus wept.

36 Then said the Jews, "Behold how he loved him!"

37 And some of them said, "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?"

38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. "It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it."

39 Jesus said, "Take ye away the stone." Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, "Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days."

40 Jesus saith unto her, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

Resurrection, the Source, the Substance, the First-fruits, and the efficient Cause of it. He is also the Fountain, the Support, and the Giver of life, temporal, spiritual, and eternal; and no man can have it, but by and from him. "He that believeth in me," (or, the believer in me,) "though he were dead, yet shall he live;" his soul would live in heaven, when his body lay in the grave; and his body would surely rise again to immortal life, by virtue of his union with Christ, "the Resurrection and the Life." On the other hand, "He that liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die," or shall be preserved from dying, for ever: that is, the death of the body would to him be no more than a peaceful sleep; the soul would continue to live in happiness; and, after the resurrection, both body and soul would be preserved from death and every evil to all eternity. (*Marg. Ref.*) "And therefore I, who shall hereafter raise all persons to life, can raise Lazarus now." (*Whitby.*) The first clause is by some supposed to imply, that the spirits of just men made perfect still believe in Christ, as relying on his truth and power to raise their bodies. Our Lord then demanded of Martha, whether she believed this? And she answered by an open confession of her faith in him as the Messiah and the Son of God, whom the prophets had foretold should come into the world. The decision, with which Martha declares her full expectation of the resurrection at the last day, is very remarkable; and shows that this doctrine was firmly maintained among the Jews at that time, the Sadducees alone being excepted. "Grotius saith, her faith was weak, because she only believed that Christ was prevalent with God; but not that the fulness of divine power resided in him." (*Whitby.*)

V. 28—32. Martha, having confessed her faith in Jesus, and probably obtained some comfort and hope from his words, returned to inform her sister, that the Teacher

was arrived, and had asked for her; by which it appears that more conversation passed than is recorded. Accordingly she went to him without the town, where he saw good to wait for her; this being more proper, we may conclude, than by going to the Jews, to call them forth, as it were, to behold the miracle which he intended to perform." But as they judged that she was going to the grave to indulge her excessive sorrow, they followed her; by which means they became spectators of what ensued.—Mary prostrated herself before Jesus in the humblest manner; but she expressed herself exactly in the same words that Martha had done.

V. 33—40. The excessive grief of Mary, and the sympathizing tears of the Jews, joined to a reflection on the miseries which sin hath brought on mankind, and a prospect of the ruin which the Jews were bringing on themselves by their unbelief, and perverse opposition to him, may be supposed to have excited this vehement perturbation in our Lord's mind: and, though he was perfectly master of all his passions, he was pleased to give way to them on this occasion: he therefore "groaned in spirit, and troubled himself." (*Marg.*) And when at his request they led him to the grave, he vented his inward sorrow and sympathy by weeping; and thus showed himself in all things like to us, sin alone excepted. This the Jews noticed, and expressed their surprise at the greatness of his affection for the deceased: but some of them, taking it for granted that he would have preserved the life of one whom he so loved, had he been able, and concluding that the same power, which sufficed to open the eyes of the blind, could have healed his sickness, showed a disposition to infer from the death of Lazarus, that there was no reality in those apparent miracles. Jesus therefore again groaning within him, both on account of the afflictive scene before him, and because of their obstinate unbelief, arrived at

41. 1. P. xxviii.
1. Luke xviii 11.
2. Matt. xi 29.
3. Luke x. 21.
4. Phil. iv. 6.
5. 22. viii 29.
6. 27. 29. Matt.
7. xvi. 53. Heb.
8. 7. vii 45.
9. 21. xii 29, 30.
10. 45-50 ix 24-
11. 34 x. 37. 38.
12. xxi. 31. Matt.
13. xii 22-24.
14. xii 17. vi 38-
15. 40. vii 28. 39.
16. xii 16. 42. x.
17. xvi 28.
18. xvii 8. 21.
19. Rom. viii. 3.
20. Gal. iv. 4.
21. John iv 21-14.
22. 1 Kings xvii 21.
23. 22. 2 Kings iv.
24. 45-38. Mark.
25. 14. Luke vii.
26. 14. 15. Acts iii.
27. 6. 12. ix 34.
28. John iv 21-14.
29. 22. 23. v. 21.
30. 25. x. 30. Gen.
31. 1. 3. 1 Sam. ii. 6.
32. 5.

41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid.

42 And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, ^a Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

43 And ^a I knew that thou hearest me always : ^b but because of the people which stand by I said it, ^c that they may believe ^d that thou hast sent me.

44 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, ^e Lazarus, come forth.

45 And ^f he that was dead came forth, ^g a bound hand and foot with grave-clothes ; and his face was bound about with a nap-

kin. Jesus saith unto them, ^h Loose him, and let him go.

45 Then many of ⁱ the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

46 But ^j some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

47 ^k Then ^l gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, ^m What do we ? for this man doeth many miracles.

48 If ⁿ we let him thus alone, ^o all men will believe on him ; ^p and the Romans shall come, and take away both our place and nation.

49 If ^q we let him thus alone, ^r all men will believe on him ; ^s and the Romans shall come, and take away both our place and nation.

the grave, which was a hollow place in the rock, the opening of which was closed with a large stone. This he ordered to be removed ; but Martha objected, and thus showed how low her hopes had fallen respecting her brother. Our Lord therefore reminded her that he had told her, if she would believe, she should see a wonderful display of the divine glory in respect of her brother. This was implied in what Jesus had said of himself, as "the Resurrection and the Life;" but perhaps he had spoken more explicitly to this purpose ; demanding faith from her, and promising a glorious event to her affliction. *Four days, &c.* The original simply means, that Lazarus had been four days, or till the fourth day, in his present state, without mentioning either his being dead or buried. It is not improbable that he had been dead more than four days. Three days seems, from some frivolous Jewish traditions, to have been the longest term which they supposed a dead body could subsist, without "seeing corruption." Our Lord rose on the third day : but he raised Lazarus, after the assigned time was expired, perhaps to give an earnest of that power, by which he will raise the bodies of those unnumbered millions, that have returned, and shall return, to their original dust.

V. 41-46. When the stone was removed, our Lord, with eyes lifted up to heaven, addressed himself to his Father, in a manner of which we have no other instance. The Jews, unable to deny the reality of his miracles, had repeatedly ascribed them to the power of the devil : he was therefore pleased to introduce this, most astonishing miracle by an appeal to the God of heaven, as his Father ; thus making it undeniably evident that he performed it by power from above ; and that the Father bare witness to him, and authorized all those declarations of his own dignity and authority, which the Jews considered as blasphemy. He therefore praised and thanked the Father, that he had heard him, in respect of the opportunity and circumstances, which had been ordered in providence for the display of his power, by the miracle that he was about to perform. Indeed, he was assured that the Father always accepted and answered the prayers, which, as Man and Mediator, he continually presented before Him. But he made this public appeal, for the benefit of those who

stood by ; that the event might convince them that God had sent him as his beloved Son into the world, to perform the works, and to teach the doctrines which they had seen and heard. Having thus spoken, he called aloud, saying, "Lazarus, come forth," (as one who had power in himself, and as "the Resurrection and the Life;" and by the same energy which created the world, the body, which had so long been tending to putrefaction, was rendered capable of reassuming all its suspended functions, and was restored to immediate life, health, and vigour, the immortal soul having been reunited to it. Immediately, therefore, Lazarus came forth, in his grave-clothes ! and Jesus, who would not multiply miracles unnecessarily, ordered the spectators to loose him, and so give him liberty to walk home : which was done accordingly. The evangelist did not attempt to describe, and it is impossible for us to conceive, the mixt and varied affections of astonishment, gratitude, and joy, which seized on the relatives of Lazarus, and the spectators of this stupendous scene. Many of the Jews were convinced by it, that Jesus was the Messiah, and became his disciples : yet others of them "would not be persuaded, though one came to them from "the dead;" on the contrary, they went to inform the Pharisees, that they might use proper measures to prevent the increase of his popularity.

V. 47, 48. We can scarcely imagine a more conclusive discovery of the madness which is in man's heart, or of his desperate enmity against God, than that which is here recorded. The rulers of the Jews were neither convinced nor over-awed by the display of our Lord's astonishing power, (which would as readily have effected their destruction as Lazarus's resurrection, had he so pleased) but they immediately called the council together, to determine what to do in this emergency. They blamed themselves for trifling and hesitating in so urgent a case ; for they could not deny but that Jesus did many miracles : yet they were determined not to admit them as evidences that he was sent by God. They concluded, therefore, that if they did not decidedly interpose, men of all ranks would unite in believing in him as the Messiah, and in placing him over them as King ; by which the jealous Romans would be offended, and, making war on them, would de-

CHAP. XII.

Jesus is entertained at Bethany, 1, 2. Mary anoints his feet; Judas, from dishonest motives, objects, but Jesus vindicates her, 3—8. The people resort to him by means of Lazarus; and the rulers consult about putting him to death, 9—11. Jesus enters Jerusalem in triumph, riding on an ass, to the extreme indignation of the Pharisees, 12—19. Certain Greeks desire to see him, 20—22. He predicts

his death, and its blessed effects, 23—26. Being troubled in spirit, he resigns and prays, and is answered by a voice from heaven, 27, 28. He signifies the manner of his death, 29—31; and exhorts the people to improve their present advantages, 35, 36. The unbelief of the Jews a fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, 37—41. Many rulers believe, but dare not confess him, 42, 43. He further warns the people not to reject him, 44—50.

mean while the Jews, (who went up to Jerusalem some time before, to perform such rites as were appointed for their purification,) sought for him, probably from different motives; and they questioned with each other, whether he would have courage to come to the feast, or not? seeing proclamation had been made, requiring any, who knew where he was, to inform the council, that they might apprehend him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—6.

Those families in which love and peace abound are highly favoured; but they whom Jesus loves, and by whom he is beloved, are most happy. Alas, that this should so seldom be the case with every one even in small families, and still more rarely in larger households! Yet even this privilege cannot exclude sickness and death: it may still be often said, "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick;" and "they whom thou lovest are mourning over the dying agonies, or the dead bodies, of their dearest relatives;" for Jesus did not come to preserve his people from these afflictions, but to save them from their sins and from the wrath to come; and to convert outward sorrows and temporal death into medicines, or means of completing that salvation. It behoves us, however, to seek to him, in behalf of our friends and relatives, when sick and afflicted; and if they are true Christians, this will suggest the most encouraging plea. But we must leave the event, in humble submission and implicit faith, to his unerring wisdom, without presuming to dictate. In one way or other, the sickness of those whom he loves will be for the glory of God, and for their own good. Indeed, we ought to be willing to live, or die, to pass through any temporal suffering, or to part with our dearest relatives, when his glory requires it; for that cannot be separated from the real advantage of those whom he loves, any more than the glory of the Father can be separated from that of his beloved Son. But we cannot judge of his love to us by outward dispensations: his ways are not as our ways, but infinitely above them; and he sees good to prove the faith of his people by afflictions and delays, when we should think it necessary for him to hasten to their relief. We must, therefore, learn to walk by faith, and to wait for him in patience and with constant prayer.

V. 7—16.

When we follow our Redeemer's example of persevering diligence in the work of the Lord, we shall experience a similar protection, as far as it is good for us. As long as the appointed, but unknown, days of our life continue, we may pursue our journey and attend to our duty, without fear of our enemies, who can have no power against us; but when that time is past, we must fall into the grave, and all our precautions to the contrary must be unavailing. Whilst we therefore have time and opportunity, and whilst the light of the Gospel is afforded us, let us endeavour to do good to all men; and let us expect death as the end of our labours, and as a sweet repose, till Jesus shall come, and awake us from sleep to enjoy our eternal recompense. But let us remember, that even disciples are dull of apprehension respecting the meaning of their Lord; and that, whilst he orders every thing in suberviency to the increase of their faith, he deems their transient distress a small matter, compared with the durable good of their souls, and the common benefit of his people. We should therefore be ready to suffer and die with him, if called to it; but many have lively affections, and make confident resolutions, whose views are very dark and erroneous, and who are in no wise prepared for the day of trial.

V. 17—27.

Natural humanity may induce men to sympathize with the afflicted: but, however the Lord may prove his people by delaying to appear for their relief, they know that he is their only effectual Comforter, and they will leave all condoling friends, to pour out their complaints before him. How seldom have we adequate views of his power and love, and suitable expectations of help from him! How constantly is our faith counteracted by alloys of unbelief! We are indeed assured, that our dear deceased relatives shall rise again at the resurrection at the last day, and that all believers shall then appear with Jesus in glory: yet this assurance, comfortable as it is, cannot wholly allay our anguish for the loss of those who were a daily blessing to us. But we should by no means "sorrow like men without hope, for those who sleep in him;" neither should we look forward to death with dismay: for our gracious Friend, who gave himself for us, is "the Resurrection and the Life;" and death is now a conquered enemy, or rather converted into a friend, to every believer.

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THEN Jesus, six days before the passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

2 There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

Such of them whose bodies now sleep in the grave, live in heaven, and shall live for ever; and they who are alive and remain, shall never die: for Jesus hath "abolished" death, and hath brought life and immortality to light by "the Gospel." Do we indeed believe this? And are we dejected by the troubles of life, and the prospect of the grave? Lord, pardon our unbelief, increase our faith, and help us assuredly to hope in thee as the Christ, the Son of God, who came into the world to save sinners.

V. 23—37.



When Jesus displays his glory and gracious presence to us, as he does not to the world, we should converse with our fellow Christians, that we may be helpers of their joy; and when he calls us to his ordinances or his throne of grace, we must not permit any company to detain us. But we should be careful not to limit our faith and hope by the scanty measures of those with whom we converse, lest we should impede each other's growth in grace. Our Redeemer was a man of sorrows. In this world of affliction he conformed himself to the situation; we do not read that he ever laughed; but he groaned, he troubled himself, he wept. That sensibility, of which many are proud, whilst they weep for fictitious distress, but are callous to real woe, he never sanctioned; but he wept with the afflicted; and thus both encouraged mourners to trust in him, and expect comfort from him; and set us an example to withdraw from scenes of giddy mirth, that we may sympathize with, and comfort, and counsel the distressed. Yet proud and prejudiced unbelievers call far more for our compassion and deep concern, than the most afflicted servants of God. It is grievous to hear men dispute against those truths, by the belief of which alone they can be saved from everlasting misery; and to see the world full of sin and woe, and men rejecting the only remedy with obstinate contempt.

V. 38—44.



The Lord still proceeds with his gracious plan, notwithstanding the perverseness of mankind; and they, who believe and obey his word, shall experience the displays and efficacy of his glorious power in their behalf. But whilst we expect help from him alone, we must not tempt him, by neglecting the means which he hath instituted, or refusing to follow his directions to the best of our ability. The sinner cannot quicken his own soul; but he ought to use the means of grace: the believer cannot sanctify himself; but he ought to lay aside every weight and encumbrance: we cannot convert our children, relatives, neighbours, or congregations; but we should instruct,

3 Then I took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

4 Then saith one of his disciples,

warn, invite, and exhort them. Thus we may remove the stone, or loose the grave-clothes, though we cannot raise the dead. But we can express our sense of the majesty and condescension of our Redeemer! For the sake of those who sought his life, he veiled his glory, and in the form of a servant he addressed the Father, before he performed that stupendous miracle, which he immediately after wrought by his own power, as "the Resurrection and the Life," as "God manifest in the flesh!" If he then shall please to speak, how soon can he rebuke our enemies, new-create our hearts, or answer our prayers for the conversion of those around us! How safely may we trust the health and life of our dearest relatives in his hand! And how cheerfully go down to the grave, in a sure hope of a glorious resurrection! Our sharpest trials will terminate in more abundant comfort, if we believe in him; and they often are means of promoting his glory in the conversion of our fellow-sinners.

V. 45—57.



No outward means can overcome the obdurate enmity of sinners against God; and they who have engaged their interest and reputation in the unequal contest, become more callous than other men. Sagacious and infidel politicians count all men ignorant and foolish, who hesitate to sacrifice honesty and justice to expediency; and persecutors deem it a public calamity, when numbers are converted to Jesus: they think themselves culpable, when not using the most sanguinary methods of opposing the truth; they run down those with oppressive power, whom they cannot answer; they imagine that the excellency of the end will sanctify all the impieties, frauds, and murders, which are used to compass it; and they deem the life of innocent persons a trivial matter, compared with the peace and uniformity of the Church, which too generally consist in gross superstition, usurped authority over men's consciences, and destructive heresies. But whilst they seek to avert calamities by such means, they bring them upon themselves in the most tremendous manner. The Lord will yet honour his own institutions, notwithstanding man's wickedness; and extort confessions to his truth from his implacable enemies. Once, and but once, it was expedient that the innocent should suffer for the guilty; and the divine Saviour willingly died for us, to gather us, as the children of God, from all our dispersions, into his kingdom: may he gather more and more into his Church from every part of the earth! But no devices of man can derange the purposes of God; whilst hypocrites amuse themselves with forms and controversies, and worldly men pursue their own projects, Jesus still communes with his disciples, and orders all things in subserviency to his own glory and their salvation.

1. vi. 70, 71. xiii. 2. 26. xviii. 2—5. Matt. x. 4. Luke vi. 16. vii. 10. 17. Am. viii. 5. Mai. i. 10. —13. Matt. xxvi. 6. Mark xiv. 4. Luke vi. 1. 42. vii. 7. Matt. x. 2. Mark x. 1. 2. Matt. xxvi. 9. Luke xii. 31. xiii. 22. Ps. xii. 2. Ps. xli. 1. Prov. xxix. 7. Eccl. xxxiii. 31. Gal. i. 10. Jam. ii. 26.

Q. 8. 9. 10. 2 Kings i. v. 20. 27. Ps. i. 16. 2. Matt. xxi. 13. 1 Cor. vii. 10. xiii. 29. 2 Kings viii. 24—34. 2 Cor. viii. 19. 21. 1 Thes. v. 22. 1. Cor. x. 1. Zech. iii. 2. Matt. xxvi. 10. Mark x. 6—9. xix. 38—42. Matt. xxvi. 12. xlvii. 57—60. Mark xv. 42—47. Luke xxiii. 50—56. Deut. xv. 11. Matt. xxvi. 11. Mark xiv. 7. x. 35. vi. 21. xiii. 23. vii. 5—7. A. ts. i. 9—11. v. xi. 43—45. Acts ii. 10. 11. iv. 14. x. 47—50. 27. Gen. iv. 4—10. Ex. x. 3. Job x. 25. 28. xl. 8—9. Re. ix. 3. Dan. v. 21—23. Matt. ii. 9—16. —18. xi. 45. 48. xv. 19—25. Acts xiii. 45. Jam. iii. 14—16. b. Matt. xxi. 8. —c. xi. 55. 56.

Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him.

5 Why ^m was not this ointment sold for ^r three hundred pence, ^c and given to the poor?

6 This he said. ^p But that he cared for the poor; but ^a because he was a thief, and had ^r the bag, and bare what was put therein.

7 Then said Jesus, ^r Let her alone; against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

8 For ^a the poor always ye have with you; ^x but me ye have not always.

9 ¶ Much ^v people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

10 But ^a the chief priests consulted, that they might put Lazarus also to death;

11 Because that ^a by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

12 ¶ On the next day, ^b much people that were ^c come to the feast, when they

heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

13 Took ^d branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna, Blessed is ^c the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

14 And ^e Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; ^b as it is written,

15 ^f Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, ^a sitting on an ass's colt.

16 These things ¹ understood not his disciples at the first: but ^m when Jesus was glorified, ⁿ then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

17 The ^o people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, ^p bare record.

18 For ^q this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.

19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, ^r Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, ^s the world is gone after him.

iv. 16. 17. v. 27, 28. —f. xi. 26. xlvii. 21. Ps. xlvii. 27. xlvii. 1. Is. xlvii. 6. Acts xvii. 6. 1 John ii. 2.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII. V: 1—8. (Notes, Matt. xxvi. 6—16. Mark xiv. 3—11. Luke vii. 37, 38.) Lazarus sat at table on this occasion, to show that he was really alive and in good health; and Martha waited, to honour Jesus, though the entertainment was made at the house of Simon.—Judas had always been covetous; and neither his professed faith in Christ, nor his apostolical office, had subdued this vile propensity. Being intrusted with the scanty stock, from which the necessary expences of our Lord and his company were supplied, he basely stole small sums from it; probably pretending that he gave them to the poor. And he thought, that if the price of this ointment had been put into the bag, he could have taken a larger sum on the same pretence, without being suspected: or rather, he was forming his plan of treachery, and wished to have the common purse well filled, before he went off with it. Ten pounds must have appeared a large sum to him, who bargained for about three pounds fifteen shillings to betray his Lord! 'I am of opinion that Mary ^a indeed was not thinking of Christ's death and burial; but he testifies that this had not occurred by chance; but that a spectacle, giving a previous intimation of his ^b approaching burial, was set before them by divine Providence.' (Beza.)

V. 9—11. Perhaps Lazarus had purposely lived very retired, from the time that Jesus had left Bethany; so that numbers had not been able to gratify their curiosity

with a sight of him, till our Lord's return afforded them the opportunity. It is no wonder, that the undeniable miracle of Lazarus's resurrection should induce multitudes from different motives to resort to Bethany, to see both Jesus and him at the same time; or that many Jews should have been convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, and the priests and Pharisees very wicked in opposing him: but the conduct of the latter in consulting to put Lazarus to death, that they might prevent the further effect of the miracle, was such a compound of impiety, infidelity, iniquity, malice, and folly, as can never be accounted for, but by deep acquaintance with the desperate enmity of man's heart against God. They seemed to resolve that the man should die, of whom the Lord had evidently declared that he should live! 'To destroy an innocent man, without any crime laid against him, only to preserve their own honour and reputation! See ^c here the infallible sentence of the rulers of the Church.' (Whitby.)

V. 12—19. (Notes, &c. Matt. xxi. 1—11. Mark xi. 1—11. Luke xix. 29—40.) The testimony of the numerous company of Jews, who were present when Lazarus was called out of the grave, had excited vast multitudes, both of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and of strangers, to go forth and meet Jesus. His disciples had no direct concern in it: nay, they did not understand the meaning of his entering Jerusalem in this manner, till after his ascension and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit.

1. 13. Mark. 11.
2. Acts. xiv. 1.
3. xvi. 1. xvi. 2.
4. 21. xvi. 23.
5. Rom. 1. 16. x.
6. Gal. ii. 3. 9.
7. 2. Cor. x. 10. 11.
8. 1. Kings. xvi. 41.
9. 43. 1. xi. 10.
10. 2. ii. 1. xvi.
11. 2. i. 1. xvi.
12. 2. i. 1. xvi.
13. 2. i. 1. xvi.
14. 2. i. 1. xvi.
15. 2. i. 1. xvi.
16. 2. i. 1. xvi.
17. 2. i. 1. xvi.
18. 2. i. 1. xvi.
19. 2. i. 1. xvi.
20. 2. i. 1. xvi.
21. 2. i. 1. xvi.
22. 2. i. 1. xvi.
23. 2. i. 1. xvi.
24. 2. i. 1. xvi.
25. 2. i. 1. xvi.
26. 2. i. 1. xvi.
27. 2. i. 1. xvi.
28. 2. i. 1. xvi.
29. 2. i. 1. xvi.
30. 2. i. 1. xvi.
31. 2. i. 1. xvi.
32. 2. i. 1. xvi.
33. 2. i. 1. xvi.
34. 2. i. 1. xvi.
35. 2. i. 1. xvi.
36. 2. i. 1. xvi.
37. 2. i. 1. xvi.
38. 2. i. 1. xvi.
39. 2. i. 1. xvi.
40. 2. i. 1. xvi.
41. 2. i. 1. xvi.
42. 2. i. 1. xvi.
43. 2. i. 1. xvi.
44. 2. i. 1. xvi.
45. 2. i. 1. xvi.
46. 2. i. 1. xvi.
47. 2. i. 1. xvi.
48. 2. i. 1. xvi.
49. 2. i. 1. xvi.
50. 2. i. 1. xvi.
51. 2. i. 1. xvi.
52. 2. i. 1. xvi.
53. 2. i. 1. xvi.
54. 2. i. 1. xvi.
55. 2. i. 1. xvi.
56. 2. i. 1. xvi.
57. 2. i. 1. xvi.
58. 2. i. 1. xvi.
59. 2. i. 1. xvi.
60. 2. i. 1. xvi.
61. 2. i. 1. xvi.
62. 2. i. 1. xvi.
63. 2. i. 1. xvi.
64. 2. i. 1. xvi.
65. 2. i. 1. xvi.
66. 2. i. 1. xvi.
67. 2. i. 1. xvi.
68. 2. i. 1. xvi.
69. 2. i. 1. xvi.
70. 2. i. 1. xvi.
71. 2. i. 1. xvi.
72. 2. i. 1. xvi.
73. 2. i. 1. xvi.
74. 2. i. 1. xvi.
75. 2. i. 1. xvi.
76. 2. i. 1. xvi.
77. 2. i. 1. xvi.
78. 2. i. 1. xvi.
79. 2. i. 1. xvi.
80. 2. i. 1. xvi.
81. 2. i. 1. xvi.
82. 2. i. 1. xvi.
83. 2. i. 1. xvi.
84. 2. i. 1. xvi.
85. 2. i. 1. xvi.
86. 2. i. 1. xvi.
87. 2. i. 1. xvi.
88. 2. i. 1. xvi.
89. 2. i. 1. xvi.
90. 2. i. 1. xvi.
91. 2. i. 1. xvi.
92. 2. i. 1. xvi.
93. 2. i. 1. xvi.
94. 2. i. 1. xvi.
95. 2. i. 1. xvi.
96. 2. i. 1. xvi.
97. 2. i. 1. xvi.
98. 2. i. 1. xvi.
99. 2. i. 1. xvi.
100. 2. i. 1. xvi.

20 ¶ And there were certain 'Greeks among them that came up' to worship at the feast :

21 The same came therefore to * Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, ^v we would see Jesus.

22 Philip cometh, and telleth ² Andrew : and again, ³ Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

23 ¶ And Jesus answered, them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, ^v

1. 13. Mark. 11.
2. Acts. xiv. 1.
3. xvi. 1. xvi. 2.
4. 21. xvi. 23.
5. Rom. 1. 16. x.
6. Gal. ii. 3. 9.
7. 2. Cor. x. 10. 11.
8. 1. Kings. xvi. 41.
9. 43. 1. xi. 10.
10. 2. ii. 1. xvi.
11. 2. i. 1. xvi.
12. 2. i. 1. xvi.
13. 2. i. 1. xvi.
14. 2. i. 1. xvi.
15. 2. i. 1. xvi.
16. 2. i. 1. xvi.
17. 2. i. 1. xvi.
18. 2. i. 1. xvi.
19. 2. i. 1. xvi.
20. 2. i. 1. xvi.
21. 2. i. 1. xvi.
22. 2. i. 1. xvi.
23. 2. i. 1. xvi.
24. 2. i. 1. xvi.
25. 2. i. 1. xvi.
26. 2. i. 1. xvi.
27. 2. i. 1. xvi.
28. 2. i. 1. xvi.
29. 2. i. 1. xvi.
30. 2. i. 1. xvi.
31. 2. i. 1. xvi.
32. 2. i. 1. xvi.
33. 2. i. 1. xvi.
34. 2. i. 1. xvi.
35. 2. i. 1. xvi.
36. 2. i. 1. xvi.
37. 2. i. 1. xvi.
38. 2. i. 1. xvi.
39. 2. i. 1. xvi.
40. 2. i. 1. xvi.
41. 2. i. 1. xvi.
42. 2. i. 1. xvi.
43. 2. i. 1. xvi.
44. 2. i. 1. xvi.
45. 2. i. 1. xvi.
46. 2. i. 1. xvi.
47. 2. i. 1. xvi.
48. 2. i. 1. xvi.
49. 2. i. 1. xvi.
50. 2. i. 1. xvi.
51. 2. i. 1. xvi.
52. 2. i. 1. xvi.
53. 2. i. 1. xvi.
54. 2. i. 1. xvi.
55. 2. i. 1. xvi.
56. 2. i. 1. xvi.
57. 2. i. 1. xvi.
58. 2. i. 1. xvi.
59. 2. i. 1. xvi.
60. 2. i. 1. xvi.
61. 2. i. 1. xvi.
62. 2. i. 1. xvi.
63. 2. i. 1. xvi.
64. 2. i. 1. xvi.
65. 2. i. 1. xvi.
66. 2. i. 1. xvi.
67. 2. i. 1. xvi.
68. 2. i. 1. xvi.
69. 2. i. 1. xvi.
70. 2. i. 1. xvi.
71. 2. i. 1. xvi.
72. 2. i. 1. xvi.
73. 2. i. 1. xvi.
74. 2. i. 1. xvi.
75. 2. i. 1. xvi.
76. 2. i. 1. xvi.
77. 2. i. 1. xvi.
78. 2. i. 1. xvi.
79. 2. i. 1. xvi.
80. 2. i. 1. xvi.
81. 2. i. 1. xvi.
82. 2. i. 1. xvi.
83. 2. i. 1. xvi.
84. 2. i. 1. xvi.
85. 2. i. 1. xvi.
86. 2. i. 1. xvi.
87. 2. i. 1. xvi.
88. 2. i. 1. xvi.
89. 2. i. 1. xvi.
90. 2. i. 1. xvi.
91. 2. i. 1. xvi.
92. 2. i. 1. xvi.
93. 2. i. 1. xvi.
94. 2. i. 1. xvi.
95. 2. i. 1. xvi.
96. 2. i. 1. xvi.
97. 2. i. 1. xvi.
98. 2. i. 1. xvi.
99. 2. i. 1. xvi.
100. 2. i. 1. xvi.

by whose sacred influences they recollected the words of the prophet, and perceived their accomplishment in that transaction. (Note, Zech. ix. 9, 10.) But the Pharisees, comparing this conduct of Jesus, and the favour shown him by the multitude, with their late edict, (xi. 57,) were greatly enraged : they foresaw the entire ruin of their reputation and authority, if he were left alone any longer. Their opposition and proclamation had produced no effect : the world seemed to be gone after him ; and whilst they were determined more than ever to apprehend him, they were afraid to attempt it, lest the multitudes should rise to oppose them. This made way for the treachery of Judas, which otherwise would not have been so necessary. The clause in Zechariah, "Rejoice greatly, &c." (which is preserved in the Septuagint,) is here rendered *Fear not, &c.* Had the rulers and people of Jerusalem rejoiced greatly in Christ their King, they would have had no reason to fear either the Romans or any other enemies. *Glorified. (Marg. Ref.)*

V. 20—22. 'By the name of Greeks all were called, 'who were neither Israelites nor proselytes, among whom 'there were not a few pious men, worshippers of the 'true God.' (Grotius.) 'In the sacred writings the 'word *Ἕλληνες* is every where opposed to the Jews. They 'are called *Ἕλληνες*, who were Jews, but read the Scriptures in the Greek language : or Gentiles born, but 'converted to the Jewish religion, which are called *pro-selytes*.' (Leigh.) Some, however, are of a different opinion ; but the difficulty which the apostles found about mentioning these Greeks to Jesus, as well as the subsequent discourse, strongly implies that they were uncircumcised persons. It is supposed that they lived in the confines of Galilee, and thus got acquainted with Philip : (Mark vii. 26.) They were favourable to the Jewish religion, and came to Jerusalem to worship, yet it is not said that they ate the passover. They had heard of our Lord's miracles, were desirous of seeing and hearing him, and respectfully applied to Philip for that purpose : but he, perhaps fearing lest an interview with the Gentiles would render his Lord still more obnoxious to the Pharisees, did not make it known to him, till he had previously conferred with Andrew about it. Probably Jesus ordered them to be introduced to him, and spake what follows in their presence, though he might not admit them to a private conference. 'Because Christ, when he sent

'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone : but 'if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

25 He ^e that loveth his life shall lose it ; and he that ^f hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

26 If any man ^e serve me, ^h let him follow me ; and ⁱ where I am, there shall also my servant be : if any man serve me, ^k him will my Father honour.

27 Now ⁱ is my soul troubled ; and

h. x. 27. xli. 22. Num. xiv. 24. xxviii. 11. Matt. xvi. 21. Mark. viii. 31. Luke. ix. 21. Eph. i. 1. 2. Rev. xiv. 4. — i. xiv. 3. xvi. 21. Ps. xxv. 15. Matt. xxv. 21. 2. Cor. v. 8. Phil. i. 23. 1. Thes. iv. 17. 10. — k. xiv. 21—23. 1. Sam. i. 30. Prov. xxviii. 10. — l. xi. 31—35. xiii. 21. Ps. lxxix. 1—3. 1. Cor. xvi. 3. 1s. liii. 3. Matt. xxv. 38, 39. 42. Mark. xiv. 33—36. Luke. xxi. 44. 53. Heb. v. 7.

'them' (the apostles) 'forth to preach, forbade them to 'go into the coasts of the Gentiles, they were in 'doubt whether such uncircumcised persons were to be 'admitted to converse with Jesus ; and ^o they consulted 'him first, before they brought them to him.' (Whitby.) (Marg. Ref.)

V. 23—26. Our Lord, on this occasion, showed that the appointed time was at hand, when he should be advanced to his exalted throne, to be glorified as the Saviour and King of both Jews and Gentiles : yet this would not take place till he had laid down his life for them. A corn of wheat yields no increase, unless it be cast in the ground, and there perish, as to its former shape and substance ; but in the mean while a blade springs up, which at length produces many grains of the same kind. Thus he might indeed *alone* have possessed his heavenly glory without becoming incarnate ; or, after his incarnation, he might have entered heaven alone, by his own perfect righteousness, without suffering or death ; but no sinner of the whole human race could have been saved. His love therefore made him voluntarily submit to death, that, being laid in the ground, as if about to turn to corruption, he might thence be raised as the first-fruits of a 'large increase of redeemed sinners, to bear his image, to show forth his praise, and to participate his glory. As this was his design, and he was about to carry it into effect, his disciples should be reminded to arm themselves with the same mind : not loving this present life, when it would endanger that of their souls ; but, comparatively hating it, that they might secure the eternal life which he gave to his faithful followers. (Note, x. 27—29. xi. 21—28. Marg. Ref.) As they called him their Lord, such of them as really meant to devote themselves to his service, should prepare to follow his example in being obedient even unto death, if called to it ; for such servants would assuredly be admitted into the same happy place, whither he was going. Yea, his Father would certainly honour, in the most distinguishing manner, all those who thus served and followed him, however man might despise both him and them. The clause, "If any man will serve me, &c." was suited to encourage the Gentiles, and all the hearers, (as well as the apostles,) to devote themselves to his service ; and to deny themselves for his sake, as well as to show the nature of his kingdom, and the trials attending his service.

10. *Is xxxvii. 15.*
Luke xi. 49, 50.
*2. *xi. 41. Matt.**
xxvi. 51, 52.
*1. *15. Rev. i.**
14. v. 3-9.
*2. *xxvi. 11. Matt.**
xxvi. 42. Marc.
*2. *xxvi. 35.**
*3. *xxvi. 17.**
xxvi. 2 Pet. 17.
*1. *xxvi. 140-141.**
*2. *xxvi. 31-32. Is.**
xxvi. 3-7. Eph.
*1. *xxvi. 110-121.**
*2. *xxvi. 6-11.**
*1. *xxvi. 9-14.**
*2. *xxvi. 16. xx.**
*1. *xxvi. 10. xxvi.**
*2. *xxvi. 10. xxvi.**
*1. *xxvi. 10. xxvi.**
*2. *xxvi. 10. xxvi.**
*1. *xxvi. 10. xxvi.**
*2. *xxvi. 10. xxvi.**

what shall I say? ° Father, save me from this hour: ° but for this cause I unto this hour.

28 ° Father, glorify thy name. ° Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, ° I have both glorified it, ° and will glorify it again.

29 The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said that it ° thundered: others said, ° An angel spake to him.

30 Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, ° but for your sakes.

31 Now ° is the judgment of this world: ° now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

32 And I, ° if I be lifted up from the earth, ° will draw ° all men unto me.

V. 27—33. The near prospect, which our Lord had of his most tremendous sufferings, excited on this occasion a vehement perturbation of mind; and he publicly declared that his soul was troubled; and what should he say in respect of the scene before him? Even his holy nature might have dictated such a prayer as, “Father, save me from this hour;” had he not known that he came into the world, and had continued so long upon earth, with a special purpose of passing through that season of darkness and anguish; without which his former labours, obedience, and sufferings, would be unavailing. He would therefore, in perfect acquiescence, say, “Father, glorify thy name;” for he only desired to be supported through the dreadful scene, to the glory of the divine justice, holiness, mercy, and truth, in the salvation of sinners. (Notes, &c. *Matt. xxvi. 38—44.*) Upon this the voice of the Father from heaven, which had attested him to be his beloved Son, at his baptism, and when he was transfigured, proclaimed, “that he had both glorified his name, and would glorify it.” The life, miracles, and doctrine of our Lord had shown the glory of God; and his death, resurrection, and exaltation, would still more extensively and illustriously display it. They who heard this voice less distinctly, or the Greeks, who did not understand it, said that it thundered; as, probably, it was attended by thunder: others, who understood what was spoken, supposed that an angel addressed him; but none of them seem to have understood, that the Father thus attested his complacency in him and his whole works; for their minds were averse to this conclusion. He therefore assured them, that this voice did not come for his sake, as he had always been satisfied of his Father’s love; but for their benefit, that they might believe in him as the Son of God. For the “judgment of this world was come.” Its wickedness would be proved, and its condemnation pronounced, in that event which was about to take place; his crucifixion would disclose and aggravate the guilt of man’s desperate wickedness, and show God’s abhorrence of sin, and the

33 (This he said, ° signifying what death he should die.)

34 The people answered him, We have heard out of ° the law, that ° Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? ° who is this Son of man?

35 Then Jesus said unto them, ° Yet a little while is the light with you: ° I walk while ye have the light, ° lest darkness come upon you: ° for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

36 While ye have light, ° believe in the light, that ye may be ° the children of light. These things spake Jesus, ° and departed, and did hide himself from them.

certain destruction which awaited all unbelievers. His death would make way for the judgment and condemnation of the Jewish nation, and of the whole Gentile world, those excepted who embraced his Gospel. His religion would distinguish men’s characters, convict multitudes of hypocrisy, lead others to judge and condemn themselves, and thus in every way the judgment of the last day would be anticipated. In consequence of his death, resurrection, ascension, the pouring out of his Holy Spirit; and the preaching of the Gospel, Satan, the great ruler and prince of this wicked world, whom all idolaters worship as their god, and all unconverted sinners obey as their king, would be judged and condemned, with all his subjects; the sentence would begin to be executed in his expulsion from his usurped dominion, by the conversion of sinners, the subversion of the heathen temples, and the destruction of idolatry. Of this, the inquiry of these Greeks was an earnest; and this would progressively be carried on, till the kingdoms of the earth would be subjected to Christ. In short, “if,” or *when*, “he should be lifted up from the earth,” to die on the cross, he would, in consequence of his atonement, and by its attractive influence, draw men of all nations and descriptions to come and put their trust in him, to devote themselves to his service, and to follow him in the way to his eternal glory. (*Marg. Ref.*) This not only referred to his death, but was a prediction of the manner in which he was about to die, even by crucifixion; with an evident allusion to the brazen serpent lifted up in the camp of Israel, that all who looked to it might live. (Note, iii. 14, 15.)

V. 34—36. The people understood our Lord to mean, that he was about to be cut off by some violent death; and they observed, that the law, (a general word sometimes used for the whole of the Old Testament,) had represented their promised Messiah as a glorious Prince, whose kingdom was to abide for ever; and from this they had inferred that he would never die; how then could he speak of “the Son of Man being lifted up?” They could not

p. 11 vi. 42. xv.
 24 Mat. xi. 20—
 24 Luke xvi. 31
 q. xv. 25. xvi. 12
 xix. 24. 30. 47
 Matt. xxv. 35.
 Acts xii. 27—45
 2 Cor. xxi. 29
 1 John. i. Matt.
 xv. 7. Acts vi.
 28—30. Rom. 8.
 26.
 Is. liii. 1. Rom.
 x. 16.
 1 Cor. xiv. 3. 1.
 xi. 10. 11. 15. 5.
 9. 1 Cor. i. 24.
 u. Matt. xvi. 17.
 2 Cor. xii. 14—19.
 14. 15—19. 14.
 xiv. 18—20. 2 Pet. ii. 14.

37 ¶ But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:

38 ¶ That the saying of 'Esaia's the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

39 Therefore ^x they could not be-

reconcile these things, and they wanted to know "who 'this Son of Man was?' They knew that he spake of himself by that title; but did he mean, that he was the Messiah, or not? Thus they took a part of Scripture, and drew false conclusions from it, because they overlooked other parts of the same holy records: for had they properly adverted to those prophecies, which explicitly foretold the sufferings and death of the Messiah, (Ps. xxii. Is. liii. Dan. ix. 26. Zech. xiii. 7.) they must have inferred his resurrection and subsequent glory from those Scriptures, which foretold that he should abide and reign for ever. Our Lord, however, did not see good to anticipate that answer to the question, which the event would speedily give; but he warned them, that the Light would continue with them only a little while, and exhorted them to walk in it whilst they had it, before they were overtaken by the most dangerous and distressing darkness. He, "the Light of the World," continued with them a very short time, in respect of his personal ministry: the light of divine truth was soon after withdrawn from the unbelieving Jews, and they have ever since wandered in darkness, not knowing whither they go. If then the Jews would walk in the Light, they must believe in it, and follow his instructions and directions: thus they would become the children of light, the children of God, who is Light, and conformed to him in knowledge, righteousness, and felicity; and so be "made meet for the inheritance of the 'saints in light,'" and walk in the Light in some measure as they do. (*Marg. Ref.*) Having said this, our Lord retired, and concealed himself from his persecutors, probably by going privately to Bethany.

V. 37—41. The obstinate unbelief of the Jews, notwithstanding the numerous and signal miracles of Jesus, was an accomplishment of an ancient prophecy, (*Note, Is. liii. 1.*) It was predicted by Isaiah, as by one astonished, that few in comparison would believe the report of the Messiah's coming; because his external appearance would not coincide with their carnal expectations: and in the case of these few, the arm or power of the Lord would be displayed, or made bare, to overcome their pride, enmity, and worldly prejudices, and to bring them to believe in their lowly and spiritual Redeemer. Or the inquiry might be, to whom the despised Messiah would be made known, as the arm or power of God to salvation? None indeed are of themselves inclined to welcome the salvation of God; but the Jews of that generation did every thing that could be conceived to provoke him to withhold it from them, and to give them up to their own hearts' lusts. "Therefore they could not believe," for it was

lieve, because that Esaia's said again,

10 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

41 These things said Esaia's, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

1. Deut. xxxiv. 4. Ps. cxxxix. 5—18. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Jer. 17. 18. Acts. ii. 19. xv. 3. 2 Tim. v. 19. 20. d. Ps. vi. 2. xli. 4. cxxxix. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

rather predicted, that "God would blind their eyes," &c. They had long shut their own eyes, and hardened their own hearts; and so God would give up many of them to such judicial blindness, as rendered their conversion and salvation impossible. The prophecy was not the *motive* or the *cause* of their wickedness; but it was the declaration of God's purpose, which could not be defeated: therefore, whilst this prophecy stood in Scripture against them, and others of like character, who hated the truth from love of sin, the event became certain; in which sense it is said, that they *could not believe* .—Numbers were given up to judicial blindness, and yet others in the multitude might not; and the preceding exhortations and warnings would eventually be useful to many of the latter, as well as manifest the desperate enmity of the former. In fact, a large "remnant, according to the election of grace," were afterwards converted, while the bulk of the nation was left to be blinded and hardened. (*Marg. Ref. and Notes on the passages referred to.*) The *unfulfilling certainty* of predicted events, must arise, not only from the infallible foreknowledge of God, but also from his fixed decree; unless it can be thought that he foreknows things over which he has no power, and which he cannot possibly alter. But if thousands and ten thousands more of the Jews, rulers, and priests among the rest, had embraced the Gospel, these prophecies would nevertheless have been accomplished in all the unbelieving part of the nation: as the prediction and promise of God, concerning Abraham's seed inheriting Canaan, were fulfilled, though the generation, which came first out of Egypt, perished in the wilderness through their unbelief. So that no hindrance to any man's complying with our Lord's exhortations arose from the prophecy or purpose of God; which related only to those who obstinately refused to comply with them. *Could not.* 'That is,' says Theophylact out of Chrysostom, 'they would not.' 'And yet, if you look to the thing itself, it is true, that the reprobate do not believe, because they *will not* believe; so that this is the nearest, and most direct cause of their unbelief. But the Evangelist goes deeper, when he says, "They could not believe;" for as the reprobate will not believe, so it is certain that they *cannot be willing* , because the darkness in which they are born cannot comprehend the light.' (*Beza.*) St. John adds, that the prophet "spoke these things, when he saw his glory, and spake of him," evidently meaning Christ, of whom he discoursed both before and afterwards: the reference is made to that august vision which Isaiah had of the glory of the Lord, and the worship of the attendant seraphim:

h. iii. 2. vii. 45-51.
xl. 45. xix. 38.
i. Matt. x. 32.
i. Luke. x. 11.
Rom. x. 10.
John iv. 4.
v. vii. 13. ix. 22.
x. 4. x. 2. Prov.
xxix. 25. Is. li.
7. 8. lvi. 11.
xxv. 69-75.
Luke vi. 22.
Acts v. 41. i. Pet.
iv. 15. 16.
lv. 41. 44. Matt.
vi. 2. xxiii. 3-
7. Luke xv. 11.
Rom. ii. 29. 1
Thes. ii. 6.
m. 28. viii. 54.
i. Sam. ii. 30.
Rom. ii. 7. 1
Cor. iv. 5. 2 Cor.
x. 1. i. Pet. 1.
7. 9. iii. 4.
n. vii. 28. 37. x. 7.
43. Prov. i. 20.
v. 1. Is. lv.
1-3.
o. xli. 20. Matt. x. 40. Mark ix. 37. i. Pet. i. 21. — p. al. xiv. 9. 10. xv. 24. 2 Cor. iv.
9. Col. i. 13. Heb. i. 3. John v. 20. — q. 35. 36. 1. 4. iii. 19. vii. 12. ix. 5. Ps. xxxvii.
9. Is. ix. 1. Mai. i. 2. Matt. iv. 16. Luke i. 76-78. ii. 32. Acts xxvi. 18. i. John i. 1-5.
ii. 8. 9. — r. Is. xlii. 7. 16. Eph. v. 14.

42 Nevertheless, ^b among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees ^c they did not confess him, ^d lest they should be put out of the synagogue:

43 For ^e they loved the praise of men more than ^f the praise of God.

44 ¶ Jesus. ^g cried and said, ^h He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

45 And ⁱ he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me.

46 I ^j am come a Light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not ^k abide in darkness.

and the prophet then saw the glory of Christ, and spake of him: from which we confidently infer that Jesus is JEHOVAH. (Notes, i. 18. Is. vi.) The word in the first verse of the chapter referred to is not JEHOVAH, but ADONAI: but it is JEHOVAH in the third verse, and the language of the fifth is very remarkable. "If these words," "These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory," "are not to be understood of Christ, what use have they?" "There being no need to tell us, that Isaiah then saw the glory of God the Father, and spake of him." (Whitby.)

V. 42, 43. The resurrection of Lazarus convinced many members of the sanhedrim that Jesus was the Messiah, and they secretly believed in him as such: but most of them regarded him chiefly as a temporal Deliverer, and probably expected that he would shortly appear in that character, and then they might safely acknowledge him. At present the Pharisees and the leading persons were so violent in their opposition to him, that these rulers dared not confess their sentiments, lest they should be excommunicated: for ambition, and regard to reputation, were predominant in their hearts: and they preferred the esteem and applause of their neighbours to the favour and approbation of God, which they could not expect whilst they acted contrary to their consciences, and to the glory of his name. Thus they suffered the enemies of Jesus to proceed in their sanguinary measures, till they had put him to death, without making any opposition or protest against them; nay, they even sanctioned their conduct by silent concurrence. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, though in a measure culpable, can hardly be thought to have been included in this heavy censure. The believing spoken of seems to have been a persuasion that Jesus was the Messiah, without any just views of his kingdom, or reliance on him for salvation.

V. 44—50. This seems to have been one of our Lord's last addresses to the Jews, before he finally left the temple. He proclaimed in the most public manner, that every one, who believed in him as his true disciple, did not believe on him, (that is, *only* or *ultimately*, but on the Father who sent him; and had all the divine perfec-

47 And if any man hear my words, and believe not, ^l I judge him not: ^m for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

48 He that ⁿ rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: ^o the word that I have spoken, the same shall ^p judge him in the last day.

49 For ^q I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

50 And I know that ^r his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

Deut. xviii. 18. Rev. i. 1. — a. vi. 63. 68. xvii. 3. xx. 31. i. Tim. i. 16. i. John ii. 22. iii. 23, 24. v. 11—13. 20.

tions for the foundation of his hope of protection and salvation; and that every one who saw him, at the same time saw the Father who sent him. (Marg. Ref.) In his holy character the moral perfections of God were displayed: his miracles showed the divine power, authority, and compassion; his knowledge of distant events and of the secrets of men's hearts, and his most consummate prudence, discovered the divine omniscience and wisdom; and his mediatory undertaking, obedience, sufferings, and intercession, would form the grand exhibition of the glorious justice, holiness, truth, and mercy of God. This was so manifest, that not only believers saw and loved the Father in him, but unbelievers also "aw and hated both him and his Father." Others indeed had been enlightened after they came into the world, and so shone for a while with feeble and reflected beams; but he was the Light of heaven, and "came a Light into this benighted world," to illuminate it by his doctrine: no believer in him abide in darkness, and every remains of ignorance and error would gradually be dispelled. Wicked men hated the Light, and would not hear and believe his instructions; but for the present he did not intend to judge, or take vengeance upon them, but would bear their indignities and cruelties with perfect meekness; working no miracles but those of mercy, suited to the character of a gracious Saviour, rather than to that of a terrible Judge and Avenger. (Notes, iii. 16—21.) Yet such persons must not suppose that they would always escape with impunity. They would be cited before an impartial Judge: and the words of truth and grace, which he then spake and they despised, would certainly rise up in judgment against them, to ensure and aggravate their condemnation at the last day. For he had always spoken the words which he was commanded of the Father to deliver: and they were not only words of truth, purity, and authority, but of abundant mercy and grace: for he assuredly knew them to contain the only and the effectual way, by which sinners might obtain eternal life. He therefore proclaimed them confidently; and if any rejected them and him, they did it at their peril. It is plain, that our Lord designed to mark the distinction between his first

CHAP. XIII.

Jesus washes the feet of his disciples, and requires them to imitate his example of humility and love, 1—17. He declares that one of them would betray him; and points out Judas to John by a token, 18—

coming, as a Saviour, and his second coming, as a Judge though he did not see good to speak in so explicit a manner as he had on a former occasion. (Notes, v. 22—29.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—8.

No virulence of persecutors will deter zealous believers from expressing their love and gratitude to their gracious Saviour. When the heart is upright, every endeavour to honour him will be accepted: though men, nay, good men, may censure it, as injudicious and unsuitable. But alas! a high profession of religion sometimes covers the most contemptible, or the most consummate, wickedness.—Many plead for charity, in opposition to faith and love to Christ; not because they “care for the poor,” but because it best answers their selfish purposes. It behoves those, who are intrusted with money to be employed in pious or charitable uses, to watch and pray continually against covetousness. Carrying the bag has always been a perilous (though a coveted) service, especially to church-men: and alas! thieves have often been employed in it. The less men are disposed to suspect or to call us to account in such matters, the more scrupulous should we be in our own conduct: for if Satan can prevail with ministers, or professors of the Gospel, to venture on petty frauds, by pilfering from the poor, or embezzling holy things, he will soon gain a more decided victory, and expose them to open infamy and complicated ruin. We should not generally be much moved with the unjust censures that are cast upon us, if we knew the secret practices and motives of those who utter them: it is therefore commonly best to keep a clear conscience, and silently to leave the Lord to answer for us. Whatever other methods we may occasionally take of honouring Christ with our substance, the relief of the poor is the stated method, and we have them always with us for that purpose.

V. 9—19.

There is nothing so wicked and infatuated, but men who have engaged in persecution, and thus staked their credit and authority in that desperate cause, will attempt, in order to escape a defeat, and the infamy and ruin connected with it. The success of the Gospel often enrages them to madness; and they speak and act, as if they really hoped to obtain a victory over the almighty God himself! We should hence learn to avoid every measure, which has the most remote tendency to this dreadful evil. But how miserable must they be, who are pained by the honour conferred on Zion's King! All things written of him must needs be accomplished; all nations must bow down before him; all his enemies must be put under his feet; and the whole world must either submit to him, or be destroyed by

26. *Satan enters into Judas, who leaves the company, 27—30. Jesus speaks of his glorification, as at hand; and enjoins his disciples to love one another, 31—35. He forewarns Peter, that he will thrice deny him, 36—38.*

him. Yet the more he is glorified, the more exquisite will be the torture of those who hate him, even to all eternity. Happy then are they, and they only, who from their hearts can cry “Hosanna, Blessed is the King of Israel, who cometh in the name of the Lord!” and who can rejoice in the meek and lowly triumphs of his grace on earth, and in the prospect of his universal and everlasting kingdom!

V. 20—26.

They who are nearest to the means of grace, often ripen the fastest for vengeance, whilst sinners come from afar to inquire after Christ: and it is a joyful sound to hear such as have been ignorant and careless desiring the instructions and prayers of his ministers, that they may become acquainted with him and his salvation. To receive such inquirers is his glory and joy; and when they approach him, “he sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied.” So great was his love to us poor perishing rebels, that he would not abide alone in his felicity; but rather chose to assume our nature, to submit to death, and to be laid in the grave, that he might rise and return to his glory, and be attended and followed by an innumerable multitude of those, whom he had redeemed unto God with his blood. Whilst we admire this unspeakably rich and condescending love of our adorable Redeemer, let us inquire whether our conduct and character prove us to be the increase of this “Corn of wheat?” It is obvious that selfish, ambitious, contentious, revengeful, or sensual professors of Christianity, are not the genuine produce from the meek, humble, gentle, self-abasing, generous, patient and holy Jesus. Such are doubtless the tares, which the enemy hath sown in the field, and which will at last be separated and cast into the fire: whilst the wheat, who are conformed by divine grace, in good measure, to their Saviour's likeness, shall be preserved to his heavenly kingdom. Let us then examine whether “Christ be in us, the Hope of glory?” and let us beg of him to make us indifferent about this present life, and all its trifling concerns; that we may be ready to relinquish, to venture, or to suffer any thing, in order to obtain eternal life, and that we may serve the Lord Jesus with a willing mind, and follow his holy example: for where he is, there will all such servants be for ever, whatever station they have filled in his Church on earth: and they will be honoured by the Father before all his holy angels, far above the most enlarged of their present expectations.

V. 27—34.

Temporary pain and suffering are hard to bear: even the holy Jesus felt a reluctance of nature to the load of anguish, which he endured for our sins. We cannot therefore choose suffering for its own sake: reluctance of

a vi. 4. Mat xvi.
2. Mark xiv. 1.
Luke xli 1
b vii c 30 viii
28. xi. 9, 10 xli
23. xvii 1 xliii
4. Matt xvi
45. Luke ix. 51
xlii. 32, 33 xlii.
53
c 3. xiv. 28 xvi

5-7. 28. xvii. 5
11. 13
d 31. xv. 9. 10. 13,
14. xvi. 9. 10. 14
—16. 26. Jer. xxi.
3. Rom. viii. 37.
Eph. v. 25, 26.
1 John. iv. 19.
Ps. i. 6.

e Matt xxviii 20
Luk. x ii 3 31.
Jam. i. 13-17 Re

NOW before ^a the feast of the pass-
over, when Jesus ^b knew that his
hour ^c was come, that he should ^d depart
out of this world unto the Father, ^e having
loved his own ^f which were in the world,
he loved them ^g unto the end.

2 And ^c supper being ended, (^e the devil having now ^b put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him.)

3 Jesus ⁱ knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, ^k and that he was come from God, and went to God:

4 He riseth from supper, ¹and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

5 After that, he ^m poureth water into a bason, and began ^a to wash the disciples' ^o feet; and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded.

l iii. 35 v 22-27.
 xvi 2 Matt xi
 27. xxviii 18
 Luke x 22 Acts
 ii. 36 1 Cor
 xv 27 Eph i
 21, 22 Phil ii.
 9-11. Heb. i. 3.
 ii. 8.
 k l i. 10. iii. 13.
 vii 20-33. viii.
 42; xvi 27, 58.
 xvi 5-8 11-18.
 l Luke xii. 37.
 xvi 7, 8. xiii.
 27. 2 Cor vi.
 9. Phil ii. 6-8.
 m xix 8a 2 Kings
 ii. 11 Eze xxxv.
 25 Zech. xiii.
 v 10-15. Ps li. 2.
 John i 7 Rev. i. 5.
 vii. 33 41 1 Tim.

mind and inward perturbation will be felt on such occasions. The true believer will sometimes scarcely know what he shall say: his nature will plead, "Father, save me from this hour; but grace will enable him to add, "Father, glorify thy name;" and after the example of his crucified Lord, he will be resigned to suffering, the God may be glorified. This disposition, notwithstanding all its defects, will be graciously accepted through him, who hath glorified and will glorify the Father to all eternity. In the great event of the death of Christ, faith beholds the world judged and condemned; Satan vanquished and deprived of his usurped dominion; his slaves liberated, his works destroyed, and his cause eventually ruined: and whilst we look to Jesus lifted up upon the cross, we find ourselves impelled by fear to flee from deserved wrath, allured by hope to seek unmerited mercy, and drawn by humble admiration, love, and gratitude, to renounce all other confidences, to break through all impediments, to cast away all our transgressions, and to give up all other interests, that we may enlist under the Redeemer's banner, be employed in his service, and aspire to a participation of his glory. But they, who have not faith, cannot thus behold this Object, and must be strangers to its attractive influence, as shown to the soul by the Holy Spirit: they will therefore find a thousand cavils and objections, in excuse for their unbelief. They often pretend that the Scripture contradicts itself, and then quote the authority of one sacred writer to invalidate the testimony of another: whereas their own partial and prejudiced understanding alone is to blame; for the simplest believer gradually learns to reconcile them, as easily as he can the prophecies of Christ lifted up on the cross, and Christ reigning for ever on his glorious throne.

Y. 35-50.

It is generally best to avoid disputing with prejudiced objectors, and rather to remind them how short their time may be to prepare for death and judgment. It behooves us all to walk in the light whilst we have it; and an obedient faith is far better suited to our case, than frivolous or disputatious speculations. They, who believe in the Light, will be approved as "the children of the light;" on all others, darkness will speedily come, and they will not know whither they are going, till they fall into the blackness of darkness for ever (*Marg. Ref.*) For while men indulge their proud and infidel prejudices, rebelling against the light of Scripture and of their own consciences, and

quenching the motions of the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus withdraws in anger; leaves them to reject his salvation: "sends them strong delusion to believe a lie;" and so they are finally blinded, hardened, and ruined. Such warnings have always been given by those who have "seen his glory and spoken of him;" and the awful denunciations of the word of God will as surely take effect on unbelievers, as his faithful promises will be fulfilled to his people. Every man therefore should be peculiarly careful not to sin against conviction, from fear of reproach and persecution; from love of praise or reputation; or from regard to the friendship of the world. That will not be deemed true faith, which doth not overcome this vain ambition, and teach men to value the praise of God more than that of the world; and so induce its possessors to confess Christ before his enraged enemies. Chief rulers are especially in danger of prevaricating in these matters: and thus they may become accomplices in the basest crimes; because the fear of God does not deliver them from the ensnaring fear of men. But faith in Christ, and through him in the power, truth, and love of God, overcometh the world: beholding in Jesus the glory of the Father, we learn to obey, love, and confide in him: by daily looking to him, who came a Light into the world, we are gradually more and more extricated from the darkness of ignorance, error, sin, and misery: we learn to know the commandment of God our Saviour to be everlasting life; and we come to enjoy the earnest and foretastes of that blessed inheritance. Yet the same word will seal the condemnation of all who reject and despise it; their present impunity only tends to harden them in incredulity; and the more gracious the truths, promises, and precepts are, which they now despise, the greater will be their confusion, and the severer their punishment, at the last day. 'From all hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word and commandment, good Lord, deliver us.'

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII. V. 1—5. The transaction, first recorded in this chapter, took place "before the feast of 'the passover,'" that is, just at the time when the feast of unleavened bread began, and before the paschal lamb was eaten. (*Marg. Ref.*) Some understand it of a supper prepared for our Lord and his apostles, a day or two before the passover; but "the hour was come, in which the Son of man should be glorified." Judas was, at this supper, marked out as a traitor; Satan entered him, and he

* Gr. 4c.

p. 27. Matt. iii.
 1-12. Luke. 9. 9.
 9-12. xxi. 10.
 xiv. 26. Jer.
 xxxi. 24, 25, 43.
 43. Dan. x. 3. 3.
 12. Hab. ii. 1-12.
 3. Jer. vi. 7-14.
 3. Jer. xii. 28.
 Matt. xvi. 22.
 xxi. 29. xxxi. 33.
 35. Col. ii. 13, 23.
 2. 10. 5. Is. iv.
 4. Ez. xvi.
 3-9. xxxvi. 25.
 2. Jer. xiii. 1.
 18. Jer. xvi. 16.
 1. Cor. vi. 12.
 Heb. ix. 13.
 1. 1-9. 22. Heb. i. 5 vii. 14.

6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and * Peter saith unto him, ^p Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

8 Peter saith unto him, * Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, * If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, ^t not my feet only, but also *my hands and my head.*

10 Jesus saith to him, * He that is washed * needeth not to save to wash *his feet, &* but is clean every whit: * and ye are clean, but not all.

11 For * he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

t p xxvi. 6. II.
 2. Jer. iv. 14.
 Matt. xxvi. 24.
 Heb. x. 22. 11c.
 iii. 21.
 u Lev. xvi. 26, 28.
 x. 12. 5. Num.
 xix. 7, 8. 12, 12.
 19-21. Heb. ix.
 x. 20. 21. 20. Matt.
 vi. 11. 12. Rom.
 vii. 20-23. 2Cor.
 13. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1.
 29-21. v. 26, 27.
 1. The. v. 23.
 1. Jam. iii. 2. 1.
 1. John. i. 7-10.
 1. 1. 20. 2. Cor. v.
 17. 21. — x. xv. 3. — a. 18. 21. 26. ii. 25. vi. 64-71. xvii. 12. Matt. xxvi. 24. 25.

“went out immediately.” That very night Peter thrice denied his Lord: the discourse and prayer are continued, without the least intimation of an interruption, to the end of the seventeenth chapter; and the eighteenth begins by showing, that “when Jesus had spoken these words, he “went forth with his disciples” to the garden, where Judas met him with his armed company. So that the whole narrative must be interrupted, and disjointed in a violent manner, to admit of that interpretation. *Supper being ended.* “The reader will observe here, that I have rendered the clause, *supper being come*, which is the sense in which the word is often used elsewhere,” (xxi. 4. *Luke* iv. 22. *Acts* xii. 18. *xvi*. 35. *xxi*. 40.) “It was more natural to wash the feet of guests before than after supper. It was done before the passover: part of the discourse which John mentions after the feet were washed, is mentioned by the other evangelists as passing at supper; nay, John himself plainly shows that supper was not ended.” (26.) (*Doddridge*.) Jesus perfectly knew, that his last scene of inexpressible sufferings was immediately to begin; after which he should ascend to his Father, and no longer be personally present with his disciples. He had loved them, as his chosen and immediate friends, with the most endeared affection, and they were to continue in this evil world after his departure; his great concern therefore, even in the immediate prospect of his sufferings and glory, was about their spiritual good; and he spent this last evening of his life in instructing and comforting them; thus showing his love to them, even to the end of his life, in the most perfect manner. When supper therefore was prepared, though the devil had already prompted Judas to betray him, and he had made his infamous bargain with the chief priests, and though Jesus was fully conscious of his personal dignity, his mediatorial authority, and the speedy approach of his ascension and exaltation to the right hand of the Father, he arose from table, (after a customary antepast had been taken, as it is supposed,) and, assuming the habit and office of the lowest menial servant, he was pleased to perform the laborious and unpleasing task of washing the feet of his own disciples. This aptly represented him as laying aside his robes of light and majesty, assuming our nature, and appearing in the form of a servant, and his self-abasement, obedience, sufferings, and death, that he might wash our consciences from the guilt and pollution of sin, in his atoning blood and by his sanctifying Spirit. *The devil, &c.* (2.) The devil, by putting this into the heart of Judas, did not compel him to betray Christ; and God, by putting good things into men’s hearts, does not compel

them: in both cases, they act freely, according to their prevalent dispositions. *Come, &c.* (3.) “How can God be said to come from God into the world, when he is always in the heavens? Or to leave the world, and go to the Father?” (*Socinian Objection.*) (*Note*, iii. 13.)—“As to his divine nature, he is said to descend from heaven, not by a local descent, or by quitting heaven, but only by the manifestation of himself upon his birth. And in this sense God himself is often said to descend from heaven, when, by any divine work done on earth, he demonstrates his presence there; and he is also said to ascend into heaven afterwards. Why therefore may not God the Word be said to descend from heaven, and even dwell with men, (as God is said to dwell in the tabernacle and in the temple,) when the Logos dwelt in the human nature upon earth, and manifested his glory? And also to leave the world, and go to the Father, not only as doing this properly by the exaltation of his human nature, but by doing all his divine works now from heaven, where he sits in the majesty and glory of the Father?” (*Whitby*.)

V. 6—11. It is probable that Peter was one of the first, whose feet Jesus attempted to wash: so that after what had passed in respect of him, none else made any objection; and doubtless Jesus washed the feet of Judas the traitor, as well as those of the rest. Peter, conscious of his own sinfulness, and firmly believing his Lord to be “the Christ, the Son of the living God,” inquired, with the utmost amazement, whether *He* could really mean to wash the feet of so mean and vile a sinner? Intimating, that it would be such a degradation, as he could not bear to think of. To this Jesus replied, that though Peter did not then understand the import or perceive the propriety of his conduct, yet it would be explained to him in due time, and he would know and approve of his reasons for so doing. Peter, however, supposing himself actuated by an humble regard to his Master’s honour, positively declared that he should never wash his feet; thus setting up his own will and wisdom in opposition to those of Christ! Yet when our Lord declared, that, except he washed him, he could have no part in him or his salvation, Peter suddenly changed his mind, and desired him not only to wash his feet, but also his hands, and his head. But our Lord intimated that this was not requisite; for the man, who had been in the bath, needed not to repeat his washing, except as his feet had contracted some occasional defilement, as in other respects he was every whit clean; and so were all the apostles, except Judas, who was a hypocrite and a traitor. This shows that this action of Christ

12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, ^b Know ye what I have done to you ?

13 Ye ^c call me Master, and Lord : and ye say well ; for so I am.

14 If ^d I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ^e ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have ^e given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

16 ^a Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord ; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

17 If ye know these things, ^a happy are ye if ye do them.

18 ^f I speak not of you all ; ^g I know whom I have chosen : but, ^h that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me.

19 * Now ^a I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe ^c that I am he.

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, ^b He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me ; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.

21 When Jesus had thus said, ^a he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ^a one of you shall betray me.

22 Then the disciples ^a looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

23 Now there was ^a leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, ^a whom Jesus loved.

24 Simon Peter therefore ^x beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

25 He then, lying on Jesus' breast,

* Or From henceforth.
b. xiv. 22. xvi. 4.
18. xlii. 21. xlii. 1.
5. Matt. xxvii.
25. Luke xvi. 13.
o. 15. vii. 22.
26. Is. xlii. 19.
Mal. iii. 1. Matt. xli. 3. Rev. i. 17.
p. 8.

x. xli. 44 - 48.
Matt. x. 40 - 42.
xxv. 40. Mark ix. 37. Luke ix. 48.
x. 16. Gal. iv. 14. Col. ii. 6. 1 The. iv. 8. xli. 32. 35. 36. xii. 27. Matt. xxvii. 38. Mark xli. 14. Acts xviii. 18. Rom. ix. 23. 2 Cor. ii. 12. 14. 2. 18. Matt. xxvi. 21. Mark xiv. 18. Luke xxii. 21. 22. Acts i. 16. 17. 1. John ii. 12. 5. Gen. xlii. 1. Matt. xxvii. 26. Mark xli. 19. Luke xxii. 23. 1. 18. xvi. 25. 26. xx. 2. xxi. 7. 21. Rev. i. 10. x. Luke i. 22 v. 7. Acts xii. 17. xlii. 16. xxi. 40.

was an intended emblem of that washing from sin, by his blood and grace, without which we can have no benefit from him or part in him. (*Marg. Ref.*) The true believer is thus washed, when he first receives Christ for his salvation : all his sins are completely pardoned ; the sanctification of the Spirit pervades all his faculties, dispositions, affections, and conduct ; and he is graciously considered as clean every whit : yet by his intercourse with this evil world, he is liable anew to contract guilt and defilement ; and in respect of his daily walk, he needs washing continually by Jesus, and learns to apply to him for it, in the exercise of repentance, faith, and prayer. Thus he is an accepted and sanctified person : but all professed Christians are not thus clean ; for some of them are hypocrites like Judas, and as yet in their sins, in every sense of the word. ' If I do not wash thee, by my blood shed for the expiation of man's sin, and by the sanctifying power of my Spirit,' (which I would represent unto thee by this washing ;) ' thou canst have no interest in me, no benefit by me.' ' Alas, I am all unclean, wash me therefore all over : cleanse thou both my hands, that are guilty of many offensive actions, and my head, that hath conceived many sinful thoughts.' ' Ye are my disciples already ; in respect of the main business of regeneration, washed from your sins : yet there are some remains of worldly affections, which must still be purged away, in the best of men. And such is your condition at this time. Ye my disciples are clean : and yet not all of you, &c.' (*Bp. Hall.*)

V. 12-17. When our Lord was again seated at table, he pointed out to the disciples the immediate instruction, which he intended to convey by washing their feet. They allowed him very properly the distinction and pre-eminence of being their Lord and teacher : if then he, who was

in every sense so greatly their superior, had condescended to perform this low and menial service to them his own disciples, " they ought also to wash one another's feet." There is no ground in Scripture for understanding this injunction literally, nor any trace of its being observed as a religious ordinance among the primitive Christians : but the plain meaning is, that the most eminent Christian, or minister, by whatever title distinguished, not only if a successor to the apostles, but even an apostle himself, ought readily to perform the meanest, the most laborious, and the most disgusting act of real charity, to the least of his brethren, when there is a proper call to it. No advancement above others in rank, abilities, or station in the Church, can be comparable to the pre-eminence of our Lord and Master above the greatest of his servants : none therefore can refuse such services, without affecting to appear greater than the Holy and divine Saviour himself. If the disciples attended to and understood these things, they would be happy in his favour, provided they reduced them to practice ; and in proportion to the degree in which they copied his example. The pride, ambition, ostentation, self-indulgence, indolence, selfishness, and fastidious delicacy of many professed Christians and ministers, form an awful contrast to this example and instruction of our Lord. Such men may literally wash the feet of the poor, when there is no occasion for it, nor any charity in it ; and they may be proud of it, as a parade of voluntary humility ; but to enter into the spirit of this exhortation, they must be born again, and become new creatures."—Probably, our Lord spake more to this effect at the same time, (*Note, Luke xxii. 24-27.*) It did not suit his purpose to speak plainly, then, of the emblematical meaning of this action ; but in fact the thing signified forms the grand example of our imitation. (*Notes, Phil. ii. 5-11. 1 Pet. ii. 20-23.*)

CHAP. XIV.

Jesus encourages his disciples to believe in God and in him; and promises them mansions in heaven, 1—3. He shows that he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, 4—6; and that he is one with the Father, 7—11. He promises them power to do greater works than he had done, and to grant all the prayers offered in his name, 12—14. He requires obedience

as the proof of their love; and promises to give them the Comforter, the Holy Spirit; and much security and comfort in communion with the Father and with him, 15—26. He leaves his peace with them; and shows that his return to his Father was a proper ground for their rejoicing, 27—29; and informs them of his approaching conflict with the prince of this world, in obedience to the Father, 30, 31.

ness? and who is continually employed, now that "all things are given into his hands," in thus cleansing the vilest transgressors, that come to him for that inestimable benefit, and in drawing others to come to him? We may well be amazed at this love, which passeth knowledge; but it would evince the grossest ignorance and the most foolish pride, if we should refuse this spiritual washing, without which we cannot be his disciples. Nay, in respect of those providential appointments, which he orders in subserviency to our sanctification, we should remember, that we often cannot know at the present what he is doing: but as he hath promised that we shall know hereafter, we should confide in his wisdom, truth, and love, when we are most in the dark about his intentions, and when all things seem to be the most against us. Much more then should we submit to his authority, in respect of those means of grace which he hath required us to be found in, if we would be cleansed from our filthiness.

V. 8—17.

No outward washing can be more than a sign, or means, of the blessing proposed. Our feet, our hands, our heads, or our whole bodies, may be washed, again and again, in any way, or by any form; and our hearts and consciences may still remain defiled: but if we apply the blood of Jesus, and are made partakers of his Spirit through faith, all things will be made clean to us, and we shall be "clean every whit," according to the gracious dealings of our God with his redeemed people. And though we cannot but contract defilement in this evil world, our condescending Saviour will daily cleanse us from all sin, till "he present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." Yet even in this sense, how few are there who are cleansed from their filthiness! In small companies, and among few communicants or ministers, it may often be said, "Ye are clean, but not all." If we would know whether this be our privilege, we must inquire whether we understand the nature and tendency of what he hath done for sinners? And whether we be aiming to copy his example of condescension and active love? Whether we be delivered in good measure from our self-importance and self-indulgence; and have learned to stoop, to labour, and to deny ourselves, in order to be serviceable to the least of our brethren? But alas, how many are there, who refuse to do as Christ hath done before them! How many of his professed servants

act as if they were greater than the Lord who sent them! Instead of his lowly deportment, they affect state and consequence; they deem useful employments beneath them; and every troublesome or disagreeable labour of love, such as Jesus delighted in, is intolerable even to their imagination! Nay, among such as seem to be true Christians and sincere ministers, there are but few, who fully enter into the spirit of the example which Jesus hath left us; and self-love suggests a thousand excuses and reasons against many useful services, which he would not have listened to for a moment. Yet such alone are and will be happy, who know these things, and do them: but knowledge, without correspondent practice, will only add to a man's eternal condemnation.

V. 18—30.

If professed disciples and ministers be found as opposite to Christ as darkness is to light; if they, who eat bread with him, continue to lift up their heel against him; let us not be discouraged: the Scripture hath foretold that thus it must be, and its accomplishment may help to confirm our faith. The Lord knoweth whom he hath chosen: the base behaviour of those, who belie their sacred profession, should render faithful ministers more valued and respected: and indeed the Lord will take care of them and their reputation, and will bless all those who "esteem them highly in love, for their work's sake." Yet it should trouble us, as it once did our blessed Lord, to find traitors joining in sacred ordinances, and men high in office in his Church selling him, and betraying his cause for filthy lucre's sake. It does not indeed so much concern us to know exactly who they are that answer this description, as to be sure that we are not of the number, and that we really love and are beloved by the Lord. But as some are more near to him than others in union, communion, and endeared affection, we should not envy their privilege, but avail ourselves of their friendship, to learn more of his mind and will, and so seek increasing nearness and conformity to him. In process of time false brethren will be detected; and Satan having long tampered with them, and put one wickedness after another into their hearts, will at length obtain permission to take full possession: then perhaps they will go from the participation of the most solemn ordinances to perpetrate the most atrocious crimes; and they will go out from the disciples, and make it manifest that they never belonged to them.

LET *not your heart be troubled:

ye believe in God, believe also in me.

V. 31—38.

Whilst hypocrites and apostates bring upon themselves swift destruction, the loss is wholly their own: for nothing can prevent the glory of the blessed Redeemer, and that of the Father in him. Even on the cross, the Saviour acquired the most illustrious victories over Satan, the world, sin, and death. There he magnified the divine law, he paid an inestimable ransom, and rescued unnumbered millions of immortal souls from eternal misery, to the glory of God the Father; and therefore hath a name and a glory been given to him, above all the inhabitants of heaven and earth, that "all should honour the Son, even as they 'honour the Father that sent him.'" The thoughts of his glory, and of his love to us, should reconcile us to our distance and trials, whilst we continue in this world of sin and trouble. We cannot now follow our ascended Lord to his heavenly felicity; yet, if we truly believe, we shall follow him hereafter, notwithstanding our remaining errors, defilements, temptations, and conflicts; but we must wait his time, perform our work, and be gradually humbled, proved, and purified for our inheritance. Who, that seriously contemplates the state of the Christian Church, or the spirit of those who seem most zealous for evangelical truth, would suppose mutual love, after the example of Jesus, to be the appointed criterion, by which all men are to distinguish his disciples? Had proud angry zeal for doctrines, forms, and parties, or mutual slanders, revilings, and anathemas, rashly denounced; or exactness in the minutiae of a system, or a curious ingenuity in multiplying shibboleths, still more and more to divide and distract the Church; had these, I say, been the test of Christianity, modern appearances might suggest less melancholy reflections, than now obtrude themselves upon the serious and pious mind. But, alas! the commandment "to love one another, even as Christ hath loved us," is still *new* and *strange* to most professed Christians; many seem never to have read it, few appear to understand, remember, or practice it; and because iniquity abounds, the love of these few waxes cold. Instead of exercising candour in judging of our brethren, that we may take in all who appear to hate and repent of sin, to believe in and rely on a divine Saviour, and to love and follow after holiness, many seem to think, that a rigorous zeal for an orthodox system ought to swallow up all meekness, candour, and kindness to those who differ from them even in the smallest particulars! Men in general notice any of the words of Christ rather than these; and self-preference, boasting, and judging others, supplant humble love, which hopeth all things. (1 Cor. xiii.) But this haughty spirit goes before a fall, and some, whom the Lord loves, are left to feel, and to show, their weakness and folly, in order to humble them, and to teach them more tenderness to their brethren, as well as more entire dependence on Christ. May we then "endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," to "love one another with a pure heart fervently," and to walk humbly with our God.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV. V. 1. Our Lord, observing that his disciples were greatly afflicted on account of those things which he had spoken, especially by the prospect of his speedy removal from them, exhorted them not to permit trouble to possess and distract their hearts. They believed in the God of their fathers, and in him as the Son of God and the promised Messiah; and this faith would be found sufficient to support them, and to secure a happy event to all their trials. The words may be rendered in divers ways. "Ye believe in God, and ye believe also in me," therefore be not troubled, for this faith shall preserve you from being overcome." "Believe ye in God, believe also in me." "Be not troubled; but how can this be? truly, if ye shall believe in the Father, and in me." "Ye do believe in God, believe also in me." There is none of you who does not profess to believe in God; if this be indeed so, believe also in me. Thus indeed you will truly believe in God, neither shall ye be cast down by any storms." Or, "Believe in God, and ye do also believe in me." "Believe in God, which if ye do, you, by the same endeavour, believe in me also." (*Beza*).—Let it not suffice you, that ye do believe in one infinite and invisible God,—who hath made you and all the world; but repose the whole affiance of your hearts upon me, the true and only Son of God, whom ye see clothed with flesh. And the rather now fasten your souls on me, by a steadfast belief, for that ye shall see this humanity of mine subjected to many and great miseries, and much contempt, pain, and insultation, yea, even to an ignominious death; but let not your hearts be troubled with those heavy things which ye shall see to befall me, the issue whereof ye shall find to be glorious." (*Bp. Hall*). "There being no example, that I can find, where the same word, in the same sentence, is used both in the indicative and imperative mood, I had rather render these words in the same mood thus, "Believe in God, believe also in me." "That I may prescribe a remedy to that trouble, which has seized your hearts from the consideration of my passion, and my departure from you, and of the troubles you must expect in the execution of your office, I advise you to believe in God, the Author of that doctrine you are to preach, and the Defender of those who preach it, and in me, in whose name you preach it, as having all power in heaven and earth, and being always present with you, and therefore being able to assist and preserve you from all dangers, and to reward your faithful labours, with the crown of glory I have promised." (*Whitby*). The criticism, with which this quotation opens, is probably just, but Bishop Hall's remarks on the faith in him, which our Lord on this emergency demanded, seems best to show the spirit and design of the passage. Christ had, however, just before predicted that all the disciples would forsake him, and that Peter would thrice deny him; and therefore faith in him, as a Saviour, and in the mercy of God through him, for the pardon of these sins, would be requisite

2 In ¹ my Father's house are many mansions: ² if it were not so, I would have told you. ³ I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, ⁴ I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

4 And ⁵ whither I go, ye know, ⁶ and the way ye know.

5 ¹ Thomas saith unto him, Lord, ² we know not whether thou goest; and how can we know the way?

6 Jesus saith unto him, ¹ I am the Way, and ² the Truth, and ³ the Life: ⁴ no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

7 If ¹ ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: ² and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

8 ¹ Matt. xi. 27. Acts. ix. 12. Rom. v. 2. Eph. ii. 18. Heb. vii. 25. ix. 8. x. 19—22. 1 Pet. i. 21.—m. 1. 14. 17. 22. 32. xviii. 37. Rom. xv. 8. 9. 2 Cor. i. 19. 20. Col. ii. 9. 17. 1 John. 4. 6. v. 20. Rev. i. 5. iii. 7. 14. xiii. 11.—n. 19. 1. 4. v. 21. 22—23. vi. 33. 31. 57. 68. vii. 51. x. 26. xi. 25. xii. 2. 3. Acts. iii. 15. Rom. v. 21. 1 Cor. xv. 45. Col. iii. 4. 1 John. i. 2. x. 11. 12. Rev. xxi. 17.—o. 7. 9. Rom. xv. 16. 1. 4. iii. 18. 1 John. ii. 23. 2 John. 9. Rev. x. 8. 9. vii. 9—17. xii. 7. 1. xx. 15.—p. 9. 10. 10. 1. 15. viii. 19. x. 3. x. 11. 12. xvi. 3. xvi. 3. 17. 21. 17. Luke x. 22. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Col. i. 15—17. 12. 1. 3. Heb. i. 3.—q. 16—20. xvi. 13—16. xvii. 6. 26.

to keep them from despair and its awful consequences.

V. 2, 3. Our Lord next assured the disciples, that in heaven, that holy habitation in which his Father displayed his peculiar presence and glory, many peaceful, enduring, and magnificent mansions were prepared, for the reception of them and of all his disciples. Their expectations indeed of preferment, and a residence with him in an earthly palace, were about to be finally frustrated; and if their hopes of heavenly felicity had been as groundless and delusory, he would assuredly have undeceived them. But he was about to remove from them, on purpose to prepare a place for them in heaven. It had indeed been prepared for the children of God, "from the foundation of the world;" and for them, in his counsel and purpose. Yet the death of the Saviour was necessary to atone for their sins, and to procure them the title to their inheritance; his Resurrection would be the earnest of theirs; he would enter into heaven as their Fore-runner, to open the way, to remove all hindrances, answer all objections to their admission, and make all things ready for their reception; (*Note, Heb. ix. 22—23*.) and as he was going from them for these purposes, so he would surely come again, and, having prepared them for that holy inheritance, he would at death receive their souls, and at the last day raise their bodies; that so they might be for ever with him, their beloved Friend, in that glorious and happy place to which he was going. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 4—6. Our Lord here intimated, that after all the instructions which he had given the apostles, they must surely know both the place whither he was going, and the way by which they must follow him: and indeed in a measure they did know these things, though they were not able to apply their principles to the present case. (*Note,*

3 Philip saith unto him, Lord, ⁴ shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

9 Jesus saith unto him, ¹ Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? ² he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; ³ and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

10 ¹ Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? ² the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father, ³ that dwelleth in me, ⁴ he doeth the works.

11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: ² or else believe me for the very works' sake.

12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, ⁴ the works that I do, shall he do also; ⁵ and greater works than these shall he do; ⁶ because I go unto my Father.

13 And ¹ whatsoever ye shall ask ² in

at iv. 4. v. 15. 16. vi. 7. 8. x. 12. Rom. xv. 19.—(28. vii. 39. vii. 4. Acts. i. 23. i. 32. Jam. i. 5. 16. 1 John. ii. 22. v. 14.—b. Eph. ii. 15. v. 12. 14. 15. 21. Col. iii. 17. Heb. ix. 15. 16. vii. 25. xiii. 15. 1 Pet. ii. 5.

vi. 68, 69.) But Thomas, (being weak in faith, greatly attached to the notion of a temporal kingdom, and probably supposing that Jesus meant to retire for a time before he openly appeared as the Messiah,) observed, that as he had not favoured them with any information concerning the place to which he was about to go, they could not possibly know by what way they should follow him. To this our Lord answered, by declaring himself to be "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." He is our Way "to the Father," and to heaven; in his person, as "God manifest in the flesh," and as our Surety and Mediator, by his obedience and atoning sacrifice, and by his intercession as our Advocate before the throne. He is our great and only High Priest, who by his sacrifice on the cross made propitiation for the sins of the world; and by his resurrection, ascension, and intercession, gives us access with confidence to God, upon a throne of grace. He is "the Truth," not only as he is the substance of all typical shadows, and the accomplishment of all the prophecies and promises of a Saviour; but also as the great Prophet of the Church, whose doctrine is that truth, by believing which sinners come through him, "the Way," to the Father and to heaven. And he is "the Life," also, by whose life-giving Spirit the dead in sin are quickened, and so enabled to believe in him as "the Truth," and to come by him as "the Way" to the mercy seat of God: nor can any man approach God as a Father, who is not quickened by him as "the Life," and instructed by him as "the Truth," to come by him as "the Way;" all others will have to do with God, merely as an offended Sovereign and an avenging Judge. (*Marg. Ref.*) Having stated this, our Lord left Thomas to collect from it the place, whither he was about to remove.

114. 10. 14. v. my name, that ¹ will I do, ² that the Fa-
ther may be glorified in the Son.

14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

15 ¶ If ¹ ye love me, keep my commandments.

16 And ^m I will pray the Father, and

Heo. vii. 25. 1 John i. 1.

V. 7—14. Had the apostles known their Lord, in respect to his person, character, and mediation, they would proportionably have known the Father also; and indeed they had some little knowledge of him and acquaintance with him, which would from that time continually increase, till they more clearly saw the Father in him, the brightness of his glory, and the express character of his substance. (Notes, 2 Cor. iv. 4—6. Heb. i. 3.) But Philip, having very confused and defective views of the dignity of his Lord, desired him to discover the Father to them in some sensible manner, according to those visions, with which holy men of old had been favoured; adding, that this would suffice for their satisfaction and comfort, when he should be removed from them. To this our Lord replied by inquiring, (as a gentle rebuke,) whether, after he had been so long conversant with them, Philip could possibly be unacquainted with his divine dignity and glory? He had before told them, that “He who had seen Him, had seen the Father,” (Note, xii. 45;) what need then had he to request any other vision of the Father, when he had been favoured with so many opportunities of beholding him, by that appointed and sufficient method, in which alone the invisible God can be shown to mortal man? Did not Philip yet believe the essential union and mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son, and of the Godhead in his human nature? He had frequently spoken to them on this subject; and his words were not “of himself,” as distinct from the Father; and therefore they ought to have been more regarded, especially as the Father, dwelling in and working by him, had borne witness to him by so many stupendous miracles. If then the displays of his divine truth, purity, knowledge, wisdom, and goodness did not induce their belief of this “great mystery of godliness,” they ought at least to believe him, on account of the works which he performed: these manifestly warranted all the doctrines which he taught, as by the seal of God himself; and the authoritative manner in which he performed them showed that he acted by an inherent power as the incarnate Son of the Father. This proof, however, would gather still greater force, by the powers that were about to be conferred on them who now believed, and for a time on other believers, (Mark xvi. 17—19;) as they would be enabled in his name to perform similar works with those which they had witnessed; nay, in some respects, they would do still greater works, than what he had wrought in person. This refers to the multiplied miracles of the apostles after the day of Pentecost; to their communicating the gift of tongues and of working miracles to others also; and above all, to the immense multitude of converts which were made by their ministry. This would be the effect of his ascension to the Father, and his intercession for them

he shall give you ^a another Comforter, that he may ^a abide with you for ever;

17 Even ^a the Spirit of truth: ^a whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; ^a for he dwelleth with you, ^a and shall be in you.

1 John ii. 27. 10. 1. 11. 1. 12. 1. 13. 1. 14. 1. 15. 1. 16. 1. 17. 1. 18. 1. 19. 1. 20. 1. 21. 1. 22. 1. 23. 1. 24. 1. 25. 1. 26. 1. 27. 1. 28. 1. 29. 1. 30. 1. 31. 1. 32. 1. 33. 1. 34. 1. 35. 1. 36. 1. 37. 1. 38. 1. 39. 1. 40. 1. 41. 1. 42. 1. 43. 1. 44. 1. 45. 1. 46. 1. 47. 1. 48. 1. 49. 1. 50. 1. 51. 1. 52. 1. 53. 1. 54. 1. 55. 1. 56. 1. 57. 1. 58. 1. 59. 1. 60. 1. 61. 1. 62. 1. 63. 1. 64. 1. 65. 1. 66. 1. 67. 1. 68. 1. 69. 1. 70. 1. 71. 1. 72. 1. 73. 1. 74. 1. 75. 1. 76. 1. 77. 1. 78. 1. 79. 1. 80. 1. 81. 1. 82. 1. 83. 1. 84. 1. 85. 1. 86. 1. 87. 1. 88. 1. 89. 1. 90. 1. 91. 1. 92. 1. 93. 1. 94. 1. 95. 1. 96. 1. 97. 1. 98. 1. 99. 1. 100. 1.

in heaven: for whatsoever they should ask in his name, as conducive to these important ends, he would ^a show it upon them *by his own power and authority*; that the Father might be glorified in the honour conferred on the Son by the success of the Gospel through their ministry; by the benign effects of it on men's lives, and dispositions; and by the display of his justice, mercy, wisdom, truth, and power, in that way of saving sinners. ^a Note also here, that Christ saith, “Whatsoever ye thus ask, *I will do it*,” which, as it supposes in him omniscience, enabling him to know all the requests of Christians upon earth, and omnipotence, enabling him to assist them every where in the performance of the greatest works; so must it consequently imply an unity of essence, betwixt the Father and the Son, and so the Father is glorified in the Son. Hence what is here, “I will do it,” is, xvi. 23, “the Father will give you.” Note also, that whereas the Jews used to beg a blessing, for the sake of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; though being mere men, they never prayed to them: the Christians not only prayed to the Father in the name of the Son, but invoked the Son also, as being one God with the Father. (Acts ix. 14—21.) (Whitby.) What prophet ever used such language as this of our Lord in these verses? “It is not in me, God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.” (Gen. xli. 16. Dan. ii. 30. Acts iii. 12.) The answer of the prayer of faith, in working miracles, seems to have been immediately intended; yet not to the exclusion of any other case, in which believers pray to the Father, in the name of Christ, for promised blessings.

V. 15—17. Jesus next reminded the disciples, that, instead of yielding to inconsolable sorrow in the prospect of his removal, they ought to show their love to him by a conscientious and diligent obedience to his commandments; and whilst they thus regarded his authority and glory on earth, he would attend to their interests in heaven, and, interceding with the Father, obtain for them “another Comforter.” The word signifies an *Advocate*, a *Counsellor*, a *Monitor*, and a *Comforter*. Jesus had been their Advocate to plead their cause on earth, and he was going to be their Advocate with the Father; he had also counselled, admonished, exhorted, and comforted them: but he was about to be removed from them; and if he should continue on earth, his personal presence must be confined to one place, and was only suited to their state, whilst few in number. But another Comforter, Counsellor, and Advocate, would be given them, in consequence of his return to the Father, who would abide with them individually during life, yea, for ever; and with his Church to the end of time: and his gifts and graces would both encourage their hearts, and make them a comfort to each other, and

13 I will not leave you ^a comfort-
less; I will come to you.
19 Yet ^a a little while, and the world
seeth me no more; but ye see me:
^b because I live, ye shall live also.

20 At that day ^a ye shall know that I
am in my Father, and ^a ye in me, and I in
you.

21 He ^b that hath my commandments,
and keepeth them, he it is that loveth
me; and he ^c that loveth me, shall be
loved of my Father, and I will love

him, ^d and will manifest myself to him.
22 ^e Judas saith unto him, (not Isca-
riot,) Lord, how is it that thou wilt
manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the
world?
23 Jesus answered and said unto him,
^f If a man love me, he will keep my
words: and my Father will love him, and
we will come unto him, ^g and make our
abode with him.
24 He ⁱ that loveth me not, keepeth
not my sayings: ^k and the word which ye
hear is not mine, but the Father's which
sent me.

also plead their cause before the world. This character of another Comforter or Advocate, and the language here and elsewhere employed, evidently denote *personality*: and the office itself implies omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, and all divine perfections. This other Comforter would be sent by the Father, and through the Son, who is One with the Father; thus the Trinity of Persons is evidently declared in this and other parallel passages; each Person distinct and divine, yet but One God, (Notes, 26. xv. 26. vii. 8. 13—15.) This comforter is called "The Spirit of Truth;" being essential Truth, the Revealer of all divine truth, as the Source of inspiration; and the great Teacher of truth in the hearts of believers. But the world, or the whole company of ungodly men, continuing such, cannot receive him, either as a Spirit of truth, or as a Comforter; for all his instructions, influences, and consolations, are totally contrary to their dispositions, pursuits and maxims. They will therefore treat them as foolishness, and reason against them, ridicule them, and blaspheme them, as enthusiasm, delusion, or imposture. But the disciples, being born of God, were already acquainted with these blessed influences, and the divine Author of them: he even then dwelt with them as a Spirit of truth, holiness, and consolation; and, as he had already endued them with some miraculous powers, he would shortly be with them in a more abiding and abundant manner. This promise of the Comforter is made, on the supposition that the disciples loved Christ and obeyed him; so that it cannot relate to that communication of the Holy Spirit, by which divine life is first communicated, and the sinner is regenerated. For repentance, faith, love, and obedience, flow from this as their source, or as *effects* from their *cause*. It must, therefore, relate to those subsequent influences and consolations of the Spirit, by which "after" we have believed, we are sealed; and which are "the earnest of our inheritance." (Marg. Ref.) Miraculous powers are, no doubt, included: but these were not *exclusively* conferred on those who loved and obeyed Christ; and therefore those comforting influences, which are more immediately connected with love and obedience, must be especially intended.

V. 18—20. Jesus was about to be removed from the disciples, as a father is taken away by death from his

beloved children; but he would by no means leave them as deserted and destitute *orphans*, without friend or comforter: for he would come to them by the Holy Spirit, through whom he dwells in his people. (Marg. Ref.) The world indeed would soon be deprived of his presence, and would see no more of him till the day of judgment: but they would see him, not only a few times and for a short space after his resurrection, but continually, by faith, and through the influences of the Holy Spirit, (xvi. 14.) He was about to ascend into heaven; and as he possessed eternal life in himself, so they also, and all his true disciples, should certainly live in and by him, till he brought them to be for ever with him. (Marg. Ref.) And in that day, when, being ascended into heaven, he should send the Holy Spirit to be their Teacher and Comforter, they would more evidently perceive and distinctly understand the in-dwelling of the Father with his incarnate Son; and their own union with him, as their Head of life and influence, in whom they dwelt by faith as their Rest and Refuge, and who dwelt in them by his Spirit, as his temple and peculiar residence.
V. 21—24. Love to Christ is the principal effect and evidence of union with him; it was therefore proper again to remind the disciples, that a disposition to receive, remember, and obey his commandments, was the most decisive proof of their love to him; without which the highest affections must be a mere counterfeit or delusion. They who thus showed their love would be the objects of the Father's peculiar complacency and affection, both as evidencing his choice of them, and as bringing forth the fruits of his grace: and Jesus would reciprocally show all love to them, as his redeemed people and genuine disciples; and in consequence of this love, he would manifest his presence, glory, and excellency, to them, in a peculiar and encouraging manner. When he had given this intimation, Judas, or Jude, (called also Lebbeus and Thaddeus, the brother of James, not Iscariot, for he had left them before this,) inquired how this could be, that he would manifest himself to them, and yet the world see him no more? He seems to have perceived that there would be great and distinguishing kindness in his Lord thus condescending to discover himself to his obedient disciples; but he could not conceive how it could be done, or how it could consist with the setting up of his kingdom. To this

25 These things I have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

26 But ^{is} the Comforter, *which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

Jesus replied, by informing him, that he and the Father would come and take up their abode with the objects of their special love. The Father and the Son being personally distinct, though essentially One, the plural number is here used. The presence and special residence of the Father and the Son in and with the believer, (as an habitation of God through the Spirit), are the source of spiritual illumination, intimate communion, and delightful experience of the love of God to the soul; exciting all holy and heavenly affections, and giving an earnest and foretaste of the joys of heaven. These manifestations are perpetual in some of their effects, especially in the abiding sense of the glorious and gracious presence of God with us at all times, and an habitual judgment that he is worthy of all reverence, love, gratitude, and confidence: but they are more realizing and affecting at one time than another, according as hope, love, gratitude, and admiration, are in more lively exercise, and invisible things are brought near, by the vigorous exercise of faith on the truths and promises of Scripture. But this must be peculiar to true disciples: for they who do not love Jesus, neither believe nor obey his words, but cast them away with contempt; and thus they not only offend him, but the Father also who sent him and spake by him; and therefore they cannot reasonably expect these discoveries of the divine glory and grace to their souls. "We will come to him," by that Spirit, whose temple is the body of his saints; and by whose indwelling they are made an habitation of God. (Marg. Ref.) Here therefore is no express mention made of the Holy Spirit, because by him it is that the Father and the Son dwell in us. And so it is in the beginning of the epistles, praying for grace and peace from the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ: because this grace and peace were to be conferred on men by the Holy Spirit. (Whitby.)

V. 25, 26. The truths, which Jesus had spoken to the disciples, in his personal ministry, had not been fully understood by them: but when the Holy Spirit, the Author of all holiness, as well as the Teacher of all truth to man, should come to them, he would more effectually instruct them, powerfully removing all their prejudices, and assisting all their faculties to receive the truth. This indeed, in the case of the apostles, was effected in the way of immediate revelation, by which they were infallibly preserved from all error, and guided into all truth. Yet this revelation was principally made, by causing them to recollect the doctrines, promises, and precepts, which Jesus

had given them; and by enabling them to see the truth, excellency, and glory of them, in the clearest and most convincing manner. Thus our Lord, in his teaching, referred to the Old Testament; and taught nothing, but what that ancient revelation, thoroughly understood, fully coincided with: and the apostles referred to the personal ministry of Christ, and taught nothing, but what his words, fully understood, entirely warranted. The same truths, therefore, are taught in every part of Scripture; in some more obscurely, in others more clearly: and any pretended new revelation, that teaches things contrary to the written word, or manifestly not contained in it, is so palpable an imposture, that not only no authority of bishops, popes, and councils, can support it, but even miracles themselves would be insufficient to establish its divine authority. (Notes, Deut. xiii.)

V. 27, 28. Our Lord being about to die, and leave his disciples, bequeathed to them his peace as a legacy, or donation. This comprised peace with God, peace of conscience, a sweet serenity of mind, arising from confidence in God and submission to him, with the hope of heaven, and a disposition to mutual love and harmony. This he gave them, not in that complimentary way in which the people of the world wish peace and prosperity to one another, without any meaning or sincerity; nor yet in that inefficacious manner, by which they sincerely desire the welfare of those whom they cannot relieve. But he gave them his peace in perfect benevolence, and with divine energy; and it was a far richer legacy than any other dying friend ever bequeathed: therefore they ought by no means to give way to sorrow or alarm, because of the afflictions that awaited them. He had told them that he was about to leave them; and if they loved him wisely and properly, they would rejoice on that account; as he was about to leave his present abased and suffering condition, and to return to the Father; for, says he, "my Father is greater than I." We have already seen, that The Word, as God and with God, is declared to be One with and equal to the Father, the Creator and Lord of all. In this respect, Jesus could not say that the Father was greater than he: indeed, there can be no greater, or less, in the infinite perfection of Deity. But as God the Son was manifest in human nature; as in this sense he was about to finish his work, and to go to receive his merited recompense, in being exalted to the mediatorial throne; the language is evidently proper, not only as to his human nature, but likewise in respect of his media-

lity.

lity.

29 And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world

cometh, and hath nothing in me.

31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

8 Heb. v. 7, 8 x 3-9 xlii 2, 3. —g xviii 1-4 Matt. xvi 46 Luke xlii 50

torial character and kingdom, in which he acted as the Servant and Apostle of his Father. In this sense it perfectly accords to all the rest of the Scripture; and it behooves all who love him, to rejoice in his exaltation to his glory after his voluntary humiliation. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 29—31. Our Lord next showed the apostles, that he had before-hand told them of his ascension into heaven, and the descent of the Holy Spirit, in order that the combined evidence of the prediction and its miraculous accomplishment might confirm their faith. But he should have little more opportunity for converse with them; for Satan, the prince of this wicked world, (30.) was coming to assault him with all his power, both by his servants, even Judas, Caiaphas and the Romans, who were about to apprehend, condemn, and crucify him, and by his own temptations. As, however, there was neither guilt in his actions, nor sin in his heart, that enemy had no part in him, and could obtain no advantage against him: he would find him in every respect invulnerable, and must therefore experience an absolute defeat in the conflict. To himself it would be inexpressibly sharp and terrible, but the event would be most glorious. Indeed, he should not have at all been exposed to pain or death, if he had not voluntarily subjected himself to it, to give a proof of his love of the Father and obedience to him, that he might be glorified in the salvation of his chosen people. As this was his purpose, and the time was at hand, he must call upon them to arise, and go thence to the garden, which was the place of preparation and devotion, where his enemies were about to apprehend him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—6.

We cannot help feeling trouble and sorrow, on account of our trials, perils, temptations, and sins; and because of the apostacies and iniquities which we witness: but we should watch against dejection, and that inward prevalence of uneasiness, which excites murmurs and distrust, and unfits us for our present duty. The vigorous exercise of faith in the promises and perfections of our reconciled God, and in the merits and grace of our heavenly Advocate, forms the proper and the adequate method of keeping trouble from occupying our hearts, and of producing inward joy in the midst of tribulation. For we shall thus be animated by the prospect of a speedy admission into quiet mansions in our Father's house above, of which very many still remain for the reception of the whole multitude of true believers. This hope therefore will never disappoint us: the promise of the Lord will not deceive us: he hath told us, that in the world we shall have tribulation, that we might know what to expect; and he would not have permitted us to look for so glorious a felicity hereafter, if he had not intended to give it us. But he is gone

before, to prepare a place for us. He is as much performing the part of a faithful and affectionate Friend, now that he is ascended into the heavens, as when on earth he shed his blood for our sins: and he is as mindful of our concerns, though personally absent, as he will be when he shall appear the second time to perfect our salvation. We ought, therefore, to use the appointed means of preparing our souls for the holy inheritance of heaven; and to wait, in the patience of hope and the obedience of love, till he shall return to take us to himself, that where he is, there we may be also. But unbelievers have no place prepared in heaven, and no friend to receive their departing souls, or to welcome them at the resurrection of the last day: a far different place, "prepared indeed for the devil and his angels," awaits them; and their enemy stands ready to "receive them to himself, that where he is, there they may be also;" nor is there any one to prevent the success of his malignant expectations. As therefore all know that they are liable to be turned out of their present place without an hour's warning, surely common sense demands it of them to seek admission into those mansions, which Jesus hath provided for his redeemed people. We are indeed far more faulty than Thomas was, if we know not whither the Saviour is gone, or the way by which we must follow him. Yet ignorance and uncertainty envelope the minds even of professed Christians, in this obvious and important matter: numbers seek to enter heaven by ways of man's devising; whilst Jesus, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," is wholly, or in a great measure, neglected, if not despised and opposed. It will, however, be most certainly known at last, that no sinful man ever found acceptance with God, or admission into the mansions of felicity, who refused to seek them by faith in the merits, atonement, and mediation of our crucified Emmanuel; by reliance on his word, who is essential Truth, and by seeking life to his soul from him who is the Life itself. It greatly concerns all the opposers and despisers of Gospel-grace seriously to re-consider this subject; and all who are beginning to seek the favour of God and eternal life, should especially direct their attention to it, that they may not delay to come in that way, by which alone sinners can find access to a holy God,

V. 7—14.

In proportion as we know Jesus, we know the Father also. Every true believer hath in a measure thus known and seen him: the character, doctrine, and cross of Christ, form the glass, in which we must contemplate the glory of the invisible God. It is owing to our inattention to his words and works, that our discoveries are so feeble and so few. Thus we are our own enemies, for this is the only satisfactory good, which can suffice to fill all our enlarged capacities with an adequate felicity. If we sinners could

CHAP. XV.

Jesus, by the parable of a vine and its branches, shows the necessity of union and communion with him, in order to fruitfulness; illustrates the conduct of God towards his church; and exhorts his disciples to abide in him, 1—8. He

shows the greatness of his love to them, and exhorts them to love one another in like manner, 9—17. He wants them to expect hatred and persecution from the world, which hates both him and his Father, 18—25. He promises the Comforter to confirm their testimony to him, 26, 27.

behold God in his essential glory, the discovery would dismay and overwhelm us: in the Person of Jesus alone can we see Him, as “a just God and a Saviour;” as glorious in holiness and abundant in mercy, and as the proper Object of our delightful contemplation; our firm confidence, our humble rejoicing, and our thankful adoration. May the doctrine and character, the miracles and prophecies, the sufferings and glory of our divine Redeemer, the great things that he personally performed when on earth, and the still greater that he hath done, by his believing servants, since his ascension into heaven, confirm our faith in him, and assure us, that “He is “in the Father, and the Father in him.” Even now, “whatsoever we shall ask in his name,” as conducive to our good, and suited to our state, *He* will give it to us; that in the renewal of our souls to holiness, our steady and successful resistance of temptation, our patient obedience under trials, and the conversion of sinners by our means, “the Father may be glorified in the Son;” for these are very great works in the sight of angels, however men may despise them.

V. 15—24.



We have never indeed been favoured with the Redeemer's personal presence, but we may hope for that of the Holy Spirit, who is sent by the Father, through his intercession, to abide with us for ever. His miraculous operations are not to be expected, nor are they wanted; but as a Teacher, Sanctifier, and Comforter, he will always continue with his Church, and as the Source of holiness and felicity, he will abide with every believer for ever. The world of unconverted men, with all their wisdom and learning, are unable to understand, or to desire and receive, these sacred influences of the Spirit of truth; and we can scarcely hope to escape the appellation of enthusiasts or hypocrites, if we profess our faith, expectation, and experience, in this respect, in the most scriptural manner. But the believer cannot be unacquainted with that blessed Comforter, who dwelleth in him; nor may he deny his obligations to him, and dependence on him, from whose gracious influences all his hopes and joys arise; and who will for ever be in all those who love Jesus, and keep his commandments. Whatever losses such disciples may sustain, or whatever troubles may await them, they shall not be left destitute and friendless; the absence of their beloved Lord will be short, and his return will be sure; they see him, whom the world perceives not; they believe, and are assured, that “He is in the Father, and they in him, “and he in them;” in his strength they labour, in his righteousness they are entitled to eternal life; and because he lives, they shall live also, and be kept by his power to

complete salvation. But these privileges do not belong to all who profess, or even are zealous for, the truths of the Gospel; being confined to them whose faith worketh by love, and whose love to Jesus induces them to keep his commandments; and they are enjoyed in proportion to the degree of their love and obedience. Such persons are thus evidenced to be the subjects of the Father's electing love, the peculiar purchase of the incarnate Son, and partakers of the Holy Spirit, in his regenerating and new-creating grace. The divine image renewed upon their souls is beloved and delighted in, by the Father and the Son; their holy affections and obedience are honourable to the Gospel, and their happy experience of near and sweet communion with the Lord in his ordinances; the discoveries of his presence and glory to their souls, the light of his countenance, and the joy of his salvation, will make them know, “how he manifests himself to them as he doth not “to the world,” while their conscious unworthiness will fill them with thankful admiration of his unspeakable condescension. But they who love not Jesus, and keep not his sayings, cannot know what these special manifestations mean: they only proclaim their own folly, if they deny the reality of them, because they never experienced them; and if any pretend to them, when living in allowed disobedience to Christ, they must be plainly told that they deceive themselves.

V. 25—31.



Would we know the way of peace, we must pray for, and depend on, the teaching of the Holy Spirit: thus the words which Jesus hath spoken will be brought to our remembrance, and we shall be enabled to understand, believe, and obey them; and our experience of their truth and goodness will solve those difficulties, which to others are insuperable. Thus we shall receive that legacy which Jesus hath bequeathed to all his disciples: even *His peace*, which is “the peace of God that passeth all understanding;” and it will contribute more to our present comfort, than the friendship, the applause, or even the possession, of the whole world; for it will garrison our hearts against trouble and terror in the most afflictive scenes of life, and in the solemn hour of dissolution. We may know his peace from that of Pharisees and hypocrites, by its humbling and sanctifying effects, and by its enabling us to unite great tenderness of conscience with sweet affiance in God's mercy, and calm submission to his will. Let us then rejoice that our beloved Saviour hath in our nature entered into the joy set before him, being “ascended to “his Father and our Father, our God and his God.” Let us compare his words with our experience and observation.

I AM the true Vine, and my Father is the Husbandman.
 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.
 3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the Vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.

for the daily confirmation of our faith. Let us rejoice in his victories over the prince of this world; and though the enemy hath still a strong party in our souls, yet depending on the Redeemer's all-sufficient grace, let us prosecute his victories, both by resisting temptation, and opposing the cause of sin and Satan in the world: let us copy the example of the Saviour's love and obedience; and let us be ready to arise and encounter hardship and danger, with constancy and alacrity, and to go hence by death, whenever he shall please to summon us away.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV. V. 1. The close of the former chapter intimates, that our Lord and his disciples then arose from table, as about to leave the house and to retire to Gethsemane; yet probably they did not set out, till he had finished this discourse, and the prayer with which he closed it. (*Marg. Ref.*) But some think that this and the following chapters were spoken by the way, before they passed the brook Cedron. Perhaps the fruit of the vine, of which they had been partaking, or the sight of a spreading vine, gave occasion to this illustration of that union betwixt Christ and his disciples, which had before been mentioned, (xiv. 20.) The nation of Israel, the worshippers of JEHOVAH, had frequently been represented as a vine, (*Marg. Ref.*) But Jesus declared that he was "the true Vine." For that nation had been only a type of the true Israel, the seed of Abraham, which consists of Christ, and believers as one with him. He therefore was the true Vine, the substance of that shadow; and all the fruitful branches of that vine, which had produced good fruit, had been rendered so by grace derived from him. His Father was the Husbandman, who planted, watered, guarded, and took care of this Vine and all its branches; he had appointed the person of Christ as "God manifested in the flesh," and from the beginning had made known his purpose of sending him to redeem sinners. He had determined every thing respecting his mediatorial work, and its happy effects. He had constituted him the medium of communication, through which alone he would show favour and convey grace to the apostate race of men. He took peculiar delight in his obedience and sacrifice, as man's Surety; and in giving him the Spirit without measure, to furnish him for his work, and also that from his fulness all believers might receive grace sufficient to render them fruitful and holy; and he was well pleased with the care of his Church, and greatly valued its truth. (*Marg. Ref.*) The union of the divine

and human natures in the person of Christ, and the fullness of the Spirit in him, resemble the root of the vine, deriving the fertilizing juices from a rich soil; and his mediatorial work, like the stem, conveys them to all believers, to render them fruitful. Like the vine, the Redeemer appears to the ignorant, proud, and unbelieving, mean and despicable; whilst the wise, the learned, the valiant, and the mighty, are counted like the stately cedar, or the sturdy oak; but the fruit of this Vine, and of its branches, are far more valuable than all the other productions of the earth.

V. 2. In the visible Church there are many, who are united to Christ merely by external profession, by attendance on ordinances, or by filling up some station among his disciples, as Judas did; these resemble those luxuriant branches of the vine, which must be pruned away, or they will crowd the others, and prevent the fruit of them from coming to perfection. Every person of this description, the Husbandman will in due time remove. By temptations and persecutions many are detected and become apostates; some are left to turn aside to false doctrines, and others are cut off by awful judgments, or silently removed by death. Thus Judas was removed from among the apostles, and the unbelieving Jews were cast out of the Church. On the other hand, every one who is really united to Christ by faith, and by partaking of his Spirit, and who shows it in the fruits of righteousness which he produces, is pruned and tended by the Husbandman, that he may bring forth more fruit. The chastisements, temptations, and humiliating discoveries of their own hearts, by which, (in subserviency to his word and sanctifying Spirit,) he purifies them from their idols and worldly attachments, and mortifies their pride and self-confidence, are often very sharp and painful, but they promote their fruitfulness.

V. 3-5. The apostles, after Judas had left them, were all fruitful branches; and Jesus, without excepting any of them, (xiii. 10.) declared that they were clean, through the efficacy of the doctrine which he had taught them, and their believing attention and obedience to it; and as all their approaching trials were intended for their increasing purity and fruitfulness, he exhorted them "to abide in him," by faith and continual dependence on him; thus he would "abide in them," by the efficacious operation of his grace, rendering them fruitful and comfortable. For, notwithstanding their present attainments, they could no more perform any spiritual and acceptable obedience, without receiving from him further supplies of

18. Prov. xi. 30 that ye should go ¹ and bring forth fruit, ² and that your fruit should remain; ³ that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

17 ¶ These things ¹ I command you, that ye love one another.

18 If ¹ the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

19 If ye were ¹ of the world, the world would love his own: but ² because ye are

V. 12—16. (Note, xiii. 34, 35.) The great commandment, which our Lord on this affecting occasion exhorted the disciples to obey, was love of one another for his sake and after his example. This would necessarily imply the highest degree of generous, patient, and self-denying affection. The greatest love that had ever been heard of was expressed, when a man deliberately laid down his own life, to preserve that of his valued friend and benefactor. Many have rushed upon danger in the field of battle, or on a sudden emergency, and thus lost their lives *honourably* in defence of those who were of a superior merit or rank, and to whom their obligations were very great: a few instances are recorded of such, as were deliberately willing to part with life, to preserve those whom they greatly loved. But Jesus, the Lord of glory, was about to lay down his life, in the midst of agony and ignominy, for those who were infinitely inferior to him, utterly undeserving of his esteem, and indeed the meet objects of his indignation and abhorrence. He had fixed his love upon them when they were enemies, and when the sacrifice of his death was necessary to their deliverance from wrath, and reconciliation to God, in consistency with the honour of his law and justice; and he had changed them into his friends by converting grace, (Notes, Rom. v. 6—10.) Thus they had learned to love him, and he had admitted them to the honourable rank of friends; as such he was now about to die for them, according to his previous engagement, and in doing this he meant also to show them in what manner, and to what degree, they ought to love one another; (Notes, 1 John iii. 16—23.) Notwithstanding his dignity and holiness, and their meanness and sinfulness, he meant to treat them as his intimate friends, whilst they unreservedly obeyed his commandments, without deviating from any of them, through fear of men, or love of the world. They were indeed servants; he had a right to exercise all the authority of a Sovereign, and had often spoken to them as servants; but from that time he meant still more fully to treat them as his friends. For servants were seldom informed of their master's intentions and counsels; but he had made known to them all those things which had been intrusted to him, as Mediator, to communicate to his Church; and they would soon be instructed by his Spirit to a more complete understanding of his whole counsel, and employed to make it known to mankind. (Marg. Ref.) But they must recollect that this marvellous friendship, between the Lord of glory and such poor sinful worms, did not originate

not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

20 Remember ¹ the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: ² If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

21 But ¹ all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, ² because they know not him that sent me.

from them. They were not, of themselves, disposed to choose him and his service; but he had first "chosen them to salvation," called them to be disciples, and selected them to the office of apostles; and their choice of him, and love to him, had arisen from his choice of them. He had moreover *ordained* or *appointed* them his ministers, in order that they might go forth in his name into the most distant regions; and that, by their holy lives, unwearied labours, patient sufferings, faithful preaching, and fervent prayers, some of them as writers of the sacred Scripture, and most of them as martyrs in his cause, "they might bring forth fruit," to the glory of God and the salvation of an immense multitude of souls. Nor would this fruit perish when they died, or only remain in the gracious recompense bestowed upon them in another life; but it would also abide, in the continuance and success of the Gospel, from age to age, even to the end of the world. So that many millions, who would not come into existence till long after their decease, would arise and bless God for the grace bestowed upon them, and for the Gospel transmitted to them, through their ministry, and by their writings; even as generous vines are preserved a long time, and prove a cordial to others, when both the vines whence they are produced, and they who cultivated them, are removed. They were also called into this state of friendship, that their prayers being answered by the Father, through his intercession, all blessings might be conferred on them, and all ability and success secured to them, in respect of their most important work.

V. 17—21. As the apostles and other disciples of Christ were engaged in one common cause, for the glory of God and the benefit of mankind, it would be peculiarly necessary that they should be united in the closest bonds of mutual love; especially as the world would be sure to hate, oppose, and persecute them. (Notes, &c. Matt. v. 10—12. x. 16—39.) To prepare their minds for this trial, they ought to consider, that the men of the world had treated him, *their Chief*, with the greatest enmity, contempt, and cruelty; notwithstanding the perfect wisdom, holiness, and beneficence of his whole conduct. If indeed the apostles had been his disciples only in name, and their principles and conduct had accorded to the maxims, fashions, and pursuits of worldly men, these would have loved and caressed them as friends and brethren. But he had selected them from among their former worldly companions, and effectually called them to preach his sym-

34 2 Cor. iv. 3—6. 2 Thes. i. 6 1 John ii. 3 4

y 24 iii 18—21. 22 If I had not come, and spoken unto them, ^v they had not had sin: but now they have no * cloak for their sin.

23 He ^z that hateth me, hateth my Father also.

24 ^a If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: ^b but now have they both seen ^c and hated both me and my Father.

25 But *this cometh to pass*, ^d that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, ^e They hated me ^f without a cause.

bling doctrine, to copy his holy example, and to promote his cause, in direct opposition to the course of the world; and therefore the same pride, ignorance, and wickedness, which had excited the world to hate him, (vii. 7.) would induce it to hate them also. He had just before reminded them, that the servant was not above his Lord, (xiii. 16.) they could therefore expect no other, but to be persecuted by such persons as had persecuted him. If men in general had welcomed his doctrine, and obeyed it, they might expect that their words also would be thus attended to; but as the contrary was obvious, it would be vain to indulge such an expectation. As they would be faithful in their ministry, and holy in their example, the Jews, (as well as the Gentiles,) would hate, revile, and persecute them, from enmity to him, and his character, doctrine, and authority, because they knew not that God whom they professed to worship. For, being ignorant of his perfections, his law, and the spiritual religion which he required and approved, they supposed him to be pleased with their formal services, and expected him to send a Messiah to humour their prejudices, and to gratify their ambition. So that when Jesus came in a lowly manner to call them to repentance, to inculcate his holy religion, and to bestow spiritual blessings, they hated and crucified him, and supposed they pleased God, by cleaving to their ceremonies and traditions, and opposing his Gospel.—“This seems a strong intimation, that even in nations which profess Christianity, if true religion fall, as it very possibly may, to a very low ebb, they who exert themselves remarkably for a revival of it must, on the principle here laid down, expect hatred and opposition.—Men will probably experience the truth of it, in proportion to the degeneracy of those around them, and to the vigour and resolution with which they bear testimony against prevailing errors and vices.” (Dodbridge.)—“They who preached the same doctrine, which rendered ‘him,’ (Christ,) ‘so hateful to the world, might reasonably expect like treatment from it.’ ‘He being not of the world, and they being chosen by him out of the world, the ground of the world’s hatred of them must be the same.’” (Whitby.) The world, which thus hated and persecuted Christ and his apostles, or that part of it especially intended, were the professed worshippers of God, as much as nominal Christians are; they were the teachers and rulers of the people of God, according to the law, and they were far more zealous for religion, according to their views of it, than the bulk of professed Chris-

word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, ^e They hated me ^f without a cause.

26 But ^g when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, ^h which proceedeth from the Father, ⁱ he shall testify of me:

27 And ^k ye also shall bear witness, because ^l ye have been with me from the beginning.

xviii. 48. Acts i. 8, 21, 22. iii. 15. iv. 20, 33, x. 39—42. xiii. 31. xviii. 5. xxiii. 11. 1 Pet. v. 1, 2. 2 Pet. i. 16—18. Rev. i. 2, 9.—1 Mark i. 1. Luke i. 2, 3. 1 John i. 1, 2.

tians and ministers are at present. Now if true religion be the same as it then was; if it be preached and exemplified in the same manner and with the same zeal, as in the primitive times; and if the spirit of the world be the same in every age and nation, persecution must be the consequence: except as lukewarmness and indifference about all religion palsy the carnal enmity of the heart; or, as wise laws bind the hands of those who would persecute if they might; and then their tongues and pens will show their deep malignity against the truth and its zealous friends. The indiscretions and mistakes of the persons concerned may give the occasion and advantage to their enemies; but perfect wisdom, meekness, and love, would not abate the enmity itself; nay, it would serve to exasperate it.

V. 22—25. (Note, ix. 41.) Doubtless the Jews would in many respects have been chargeable with sin, if Christ had not appeared among them, for even the Gentiles are inexcusable in their ungodliness: but their sins would have been comparatively small, had he not come among them, published his holy and gracious doctrine, and confirmed it with such miracles as no other person had ever wrought. These things having excited their most virulent enmity, and given occasion to their perpetrating the most atrocious crimes, exceedingly increased their guilt, and left them without the least excuse or palliation of it: for in every respect, Jesus so represented to them the divine glory and character, that, in hating him, they manifested the utmost enmity to God: as all others do, who reject and oppose his Gospel, when plainly set before them. And as they had seen his character and miracles, and observed his ministry with the most decided enmity, so they had in him seen and hated the holiness, the authority, and the glory, of God himself. Thus they fulfilled the words of David, who spake as a type of him, and who was hated without cause, by the men of his generation. (Marg. Ref.) For the meaning of the word rendered “without cause,” see the Marginal References on the Greek.

V. 26, 27. The apostles, when they saw the contempt and cruelty with which their Lord was treated, and when they found that they must expect similar ill usage, might have been ready to conclude that none would attend to their doctrine. He therefore assured them, that the Comforter, whom he had promised to send them, would testify of him, by his miraculous operations, and by giving success to the Gospel: and they too, instructed, emboldened, and encouraged by his influences, would bear

CHAP. XVI.

Jesus again warns his disciples to expect persecution, and notices their sorrow, 1—6. He shows that his departure would be expedient for them, as he would send the Comforter, 7. He explains the nature and effects of the Spirit's influence, 8—15. He intimates his death, re-

surrection, and ascension; with assurances that their sorrow should soon be turned into joy, and that their prayers in his name should be accepted, 16—28. They profess their faith in him: he foretells that they will desert him; yet promises them his peace, amidst their tribulation in the world, 29—33.

testimony to his character, resurrection, ascension, and the glory of his kingdom and salvation; for which they would be eminently competent, as they had been with him from the beginning of his ministry. The Holy Spirit is here said to *proceed* from the Father; and many suppose this to refer, not only to his being sent forth from the Father and the Son, (as the Son was from the Father,) a willing messenger, to apply the salvation of Christ to the hearts of his chosen people, but to what is called his *eternal procession* from the Father, by which is meant something similar to the *eternal generation* of the Son. But these are incomprehensible mysteries, and, (though inserted in most of the ancient creeds and formularies,) seem not to be explicitly and evidently revealed; perhaps it is therefore better to adore in silence, than attempt any explanation of such subjects, which, not being clearly revealed, cannot otherwise be at all discovered or understood. The language, however, is manifestly *personal*. He, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, is sent, comes, bears witness, &c. as in other places he is said to hear, speak, command, forbid, &c. (*Marg. Ref.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—3.

In the person and salvation of Emmanuel, the Lord hath made effectual provision for the sanctification, as well as the acceptance, of all those who believe in him; but all others must die unreconciled and unholy. He is the true Vine, whom God hath planted, and watereth continually. As professed Christians, we appear to belong to this Vine; but we to be them, who have no other union, no more intimate communion, than what consists in notions, sacraments, and forms. Such will not bear good fruit, perhaps very bad indeed, and one after another of them will be taken away, and left as fuel to the fire of God's wrath. But even such branches as bear fruit have many remaining hinderances to fruitfulness, and the gracious care of the Husbandman consists in "purging" them, that they may bring forth more fruit;" so that it may reasonably be expected, that true believers will commonly grow in grace under this heavenly culture, and if sharp means be employed to promote their sanctification, they will, when in their right mind, be thankful for them. Much more will they desire and pray to be enabled to abide in Christ, that he may abide in them by his word and Spirit, and they will attend on all instituted ordinances, as means of cementing and preserving this blessed union. They know, that only in the persevering exercise of faith in Christ they can possess the assurance that they "are clean through his word;" they dread nothing so

much, as being found at last among unfruitful branches, and, as such, left to wither and be cast into the fire; and this fear, and the desire of being made fruitful, will dictate such prayers as will surely be answered. But Christians long to bring forth more and more fruit: they know that the will and the power must come from Christ, "without whom they can do nothing;" they find by experience, that any interruption in the exercise of faith abates the vigour of every holy affection, makes way for the renewed energy of carnal inclination, and thus robs them of all spiritual consolation. On the other hand, when they simply live by faith in the Son of God, they are made fruitful and joyful, they glorify God, and possess in their own consciences the assurance, that they are the true disciples of the Saviour, and are manifested as such in the consciences of others also. Let us then indulge a holy ambition, of living more simply on the fulness of Christ, and of growing more fruitful in every good word and work, and let us be upon our guard against those who profess to abide in the living Vine, but produce wild and poisonous grapes, instead of the fruits of righteousness and true holiness.

V. 9—16.

Whilst we admire the unspeakable love of Jesus to us, according to the Father's love of him, let us follow his example of obedience, that we may continue in his love, and as he rejoices over us to do us good, so may our joy in him and his salvation be full, by near communion with him and a conscientious walk before him. Let us often recollect what a kind and gracious Lord we serve! It is his commandment, that we love one another, as he hath loved us, and no love of man, to his dearest friend, ever equalled his love to us, when strangers and enemies. What admiration must have pervaded the hosts of heaven, when a friendship was proposed betwixt the Object of their exalted adorations and poor sinful men on earth! When he assumed human nature, and laid down his life upon the cross for us! when he quickened us by his grace, and so made us willing to become his disciples and his friends! And when they observe how he treats us with the most unreserved affection, makes known to us his gracious purposes, and notices our mean concerns! But let us observe, that they only are the Redeemer's friends, who "do whatsoever he commands them." He hath stated this evidence, and insisted on this return of friendship, and it is presumption to claim the privilege, whilst we allow ourselves in any instance of disobedience. If we indeed do now choose him as our Beloved, we should remember, that this is the effect of his previous choice of us. He hath also appointed each of us, his place and work, that

4 x. 11. Matt. xi. 6. xlii. 21. 57. xxi. 10. xxi. 31—33. Rom. xiv. 21. Phil. i. 10. 1 Pet. ii. 8. 2. 22. 34. xii. 42. Luke vi. 22. 1 Cor. iv. 13. 3. 22. xxi. 6. Acts v. 33. vi. 14. vii. 36—60. viii. 1—3. ix. 12. x. xii. 3. 4. 19—23. xxvi. 9—11. Rom. x. 2, 3. Gal. i. 13, 14. Phil. iii. 6. — d. vii. 19, 55. xv. 23. xvii. 3. 25. Luke x. 22. 1 Cor. ii. 8. 2 Cor. iv. 3—6. 2 Thes. i. 8. ii. 10—12. 1 Tim. i. 13. 1 John iii. 1. iv. 9. v. 20.

THESE things ^a have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. 2 They ^b shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, ^c the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

3 And these things will they do unto you, ^d because they have not known the Father, nor me.

4 But these things have I told you, ^e that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said unto you at the beginning; ^f because I was with you.

5 But now ^g I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, ^h Whither goest thou?

6 But because I have said these things unto you, ⁱ sorrow hath filled your heart.

120—22. xiv. 1. 27, 28. xx. 11—13. Luke xxi. 45. xxiv. 17.

we may bring forth fruit, in our holy lives, and the improvement of our several talents; and as the fruit produced by the apostles still remains for our good, so the effect of our feeble endeavours may in some measure conduce to the benefit of others, long after we are gone to our rest. Even in our case, some, to whom God hath made us useful, may after our decease be useful to others. Thus faithful ministers, able writers, and zealous champions for the truth, may spring from the seed which we have sown; and how far this may extend, or how long it may remain, or what numbers may eventually derive benefit from it, who can tell?

V. 17—27.

It is of great importance that all Christians should unite with their brethren in holy love, and in zealous endeavours to promote the cause of the Gospel; and let us not be dismayed by the hatred of the world, which can only love its own, but must dislike those whom Christ hath chosen out of the world, who bear his image, profess his truth, and obey his commandments. We cannot experience worse usage than our Master met with; and we ought not to be stumbled, or grow weary of well-doing, if we meet with no better. The more we resemble him, the greater enmity will proud and ungodly men feel against us: yet we should be thankful for the restraints which providence hath placed to bloody persecution, and we ought carefully to avoid exciting needless opposition, by rashness, turbulency, or intermeddling with things not properly belonging to us. But, if we suffer for Christ's sake, and from those who hate him, and the Father that sent him, we should rejoice and be exceedingly glad. Alas, how little do many persons think, that in rejecting and opposing the doctrine of Christ, as our Prophet, Priest, and King, they prove themselves ignorant of that one living and true God, whom they profess to worship; that they are in fact setting up an idol, the creature of their own imagination and proud reasonings, in the place of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and that their opposition to the Scriptural view of the person, atonement, and salvation of the Son of God, springs from determined enmity to the holy character, authority, law, and worship of JEHOVAH! Thus it was with the Jews, who saw and hated both the Son of God, and the Father who sent him; thus it is, at this day, with many, who have the Scriptures in their hand, the evidences of their divine original clearly set before them, and perhaps the Gospel faithfully preached to them; whose guilt is thus exceedingly aggravated, and they have no cloak for their sins, as they evi-

dently hate Christ, the Light of the world, because their deeds are evil, and their whole disposition and conduct are diametrically opposite to his holy truths and precepts. But even in these persons the Scripture is fulfilled; whilst, by the conversion of many sinners, and the holy lives of numbers who profess the Gospel, the Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, still bears testimony to Christ, and confirms that of those faithful ministers, who preach his free and glorious salvation, after the example and doctrine of those who were with him from the beginning.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI. V. 1—3. (Notes, xv. 17—27.) The apostles had probably expected honour and attention from their relation to Christ; and if this vain hope had been countenanced, their subsequent trials might have tempted them to think that they had been deceived. (Note, *Ser. xx. 7*.) Our Lord therefore warned them that persecutions awaited them, that they might not be stumbled or 'disconcerted, as by an unexpected and intolerable thing.' (Beza.) The Jewish rulers would not only excommunicate them, but they would soon arrive at that pitch of bigotry and malice, as to deem the murder of them, or any others of his disciples, an acceptable service to God. They would not only treat them as "sheep for the slaughter," but as *sheep for the altar*; and expect to merit the favour of God by putting them to death, in support of the Mosaic dispensation, and their own traditions; ^a of the nature of a sacrifice which propitiated 'for other offences.' (Hammond.) This was the case with Saul and many other zealots among the Jews, and the same hath doubtless been the case with many professed Christians, who have been drunken with the blood of the saints, and the martyrs of Jesus. The rulers of the Jews had a blind, proud, and headstrong kind of conscientiousness in what they did; but they persecuted the disciples of Christ from ignorance of the perfections of God himself; and because, not knowing the Father, they knew not his Son, their promised Messiah, when he appeared among them, and thus they expected to please God, by such actions as could only gratify the malignant prince of darkness! The particle *αὐτῶ* is here translated *yea*, (Note, *Phil. ii. 7*.) The highest degree of excommunication was supposed to imply the sentence of death, (Notes, *Deut. xiii.*) and as the magistrate, at this time, had not authority to carry it into execution, the zealots seem to have made a merit of inflicting it by assassination, in any way which they could devise. (Notes, *Acts xxiii.*)

V. 4—6. Our Lord predicted these things thus expli-

K viii. 45, 46. 7 Nevertheless, ^k I tell you the truth; Luke iv. 25, 26. 1 It is expedient for you that I go away: 22 Acts x. 34. for if I go not away, ^m the Comforter will not come unto you; 1xi. 50—52 xiv. 28 Rom vii. 26 2 Cor. iii. 17. 12 but if I depart I will send him unto you. 30. xiv. 16, 17, 26, xvi. 28. 13 Ps. lxxviii. 18. Luke xxiv. 29. Acts i. 4, 5, ii. 33. Eph. iv. 8—12.

14 * 8. And when he is come, ^o he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. 15

Or, convince. viii. 34. 1 Cor. xiv. 21 Jude 15.

cily, before he was taken from the disciples, that the remembrance of his words might support them under their trials. He had indeed before given them several intimations, both of the hatred which they would incur, and of his removal from them, but not in so explicit a manner as he did at that time; for, being to continue longer with them, he was always at hand to obviate their misconceptions, and answer their inquiries. 'While I was here, all the malice of men bent itself wholly on me, letting you alone; but now the opposition will light on you.' (*Hammond.*) Our Lord, however, was about to return to his Father; and since he had first assured the disciples that they could not follow him immediately, and had intimated that he was about to leave the world, they had not asked him any thing particular about the state and place to which he was going; and therefore, instead of rejoicing in his approaching exaltation, and hoping for important benefits from it, they were overwhelmed with sorrow, as if they were about to suffer an irreparable loss.

V. 7. (Notes, xiv. 15—17. 25—28. xv. 26, 27.) Our Lord had before intimated, that his departure from the disciples would prove advantageous to them; and he here solemnly assured them, that what he told them was perfect truth, though they seemed so backward to believe him. It was highly expedient for him to leave them; for, unless he passed through his sufferings to glory, the promised Comforter would not come unto them, as this blessing was bestowed on sinners through his atonement and intercession, and the abundant pouring out of the Holy Spirit would be the immediate effect of his ascension into heaven, and could not take place without it. (Note, vii. 37—39.) When therefore he was gone, he would surely send him to them, according to the counsel and covenant of redemption. Our Lord not only promised that he would "pray the Father" to send the Comforter, but also that he *himself*, as One with the Father, and as exalted for that purpose to his mediatorial throne, would send him. This does not imply that the Holy Spirit is *naturally* inferior to the Son of God; neither does the mission of the Son prove that he is *naturally* inferior to the Father. An ambassador is not *naturally* inferior to the prince who sends him, and his being a subject is a mere circumstance not essential to his office; but in that office he appears *relatively* inferior to his prince, and, as such, acts by commission, and observes his instructions. To this he is bound by the nature of the service, though he might be perfectly voluntary in taking it upon him. This illustration may help our conceptions of the co-equality of the three Persons in the sacred Trinity, and of the relative and voluntary inferiority of the Son and Spirit, as to their

9 Of ^p sin, because they believe not p. iii. 18—21. v. 40—44 viii. 23. 24. 32—47 xiii. 47. 48. xv. 22—25 Mark. xvi. 13 Acts i. 30—38. in 14—19. vii. 51—53. xxi. 9. Rom. iii. 19, 20. 1 Thes. ii. 15, 16. 1 Tim. i. 13. Heb. iii. 12 x. 20, 29. — 1 J. xiii. 21 xiv. 21, 25. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6 Dan. ix. 24 Rom. 17. ii. 21—26 v. 17—21 viii. 33, 34, 3, 4. 1 Cor. i. 30. xv. 11—20. 2 Cor. v. 21 Gal. v. 5 Phil. iii. 7—9. 1 Tim. iii. 16 Heb. x. 5—13. — rev. 22—27 Matt. xii. 18—36 Acts 42 xxi. 30, 31 xxiv. 25. Rom. ii. 3, 4. 16. xiv. 10—12. 1 Cor. iv. 5 vi. 3, 4. 2 Cor. v. 10, 11. Heb. vi. 2. 12. 27 x. 27, 2 Pet. ii. 4—9. iii. 7. Rev. i. 7. xx. 11—12. — xiii. 31 xiv. 30 Gen. ii. 15 Ps. lxxviii. 18. Luke x. 18. Rom. xxi. 20. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Eph. ii. 2 Heb. ii. 14. 1 John iii. 8. Rev. xii. 7—10. xx. 2, 3, 10.

10 Of ^q righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more: 11 Of ^r judgment, because ^s the prince of this world is judged.

Heb. iii. 12 x. 20, 29. — 1 J. xiii. 21 xiv. 21, 25. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6 Dan. ix. 24 Rom. 17. ii. 21—26 v. 17—21 viii. 33, 34, 3, 4. 1 Cor. i. 30. xv. 11—20. 2 Cor. v. 21 Gal. v. 5 Phil. iii. 7—9. 1 Tim. iii. 16 Heb. x. 5—13. — rev. 22—27 Matt. xii. 18—36 Acts 42 xxi. 30, 31 xxiv. 25. Rom. ii. 3, 4. 16. xiv. 10—12. 1 Cor. iv. 5 vi. 3, 4. 2 Cor. v. 10, 11. Heb. vi. 2. 12. 27 x. 27, 2 Pet. ii. 4—9. iii. 7. Rev. i. 7. xx. 11—12. — xiii. 31 xiv. 30 Gen. ii. 15 Ps. lxxviii. 18. Luke x. 18. Rom. xxi. 20. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Eph. ii. 2 Heb. ii. 14. 1 John iii. 8. Rev. xii. 7—10. xx. 2, 3, 10.

respective offices in man's redemption. The presence of the Comforter would be far more advantageous to the apostles and the other disciples, than that of Christ in person could have been. He would be every where with them, when they were separated from each other; his teaching, counsels, and consolations, would be inward and efficacious; and his influences would both qualify them for their work, and ensure their success in it. 'The word signifies an *Advocate*, and a *Comforter*. He did the part of an *Advocate*, in respect of Christ and his Gospel, by convincing the world of sin, in not believing on him, and of the righteousness of Christ; and by confirming the apostles' testimony of him by signs and miracles, and various gifts imparted to them, (*Heb.* ii. 4.) and by pleading their cause before kings and rulers, and against all adversaries. (*Matt.* x. 18, 19. *Luke* xxi. 15. *Acts* vi. 10.) In respect of the apostles and the faithful, he also did the part of a *Comforter*, as being sent for their consolation and support in all their troubles, filling their hearts with joy and gladness, and giving them an inward testimony of God's love to them, and an assurance of their future happiness.' (*Rom.* viii. 15, 16.) (*Whitby.*)

V. 8—11. "When He," (*exclusively*, the personal pronoun,) "shall come, he shall reprove the world of sin, &c." or rather, "shall convince the world concerning sin, concerning righteousness, and concerning judgment." The preposition *σιν* properly signifies *concerning*; and this rendering seems to throw much light on the subject. The passage may be interpreted of the miraculous powers communicated by the Holy Spirit, by which the world stood convicted of sin, in rejecting and crucifying the Lord of glory; by which the righteousness of Christ was fully proved, seeing he was returned to the Father, and appeared no more among them; but, in proof of his being glorified, had sent forth his Holy Spirit upon his disciples. Thus it was also evinced, that he would judge the world, as he had declared: seeing that Satan, the prince of the world, (by the power of the Holy Ghost attesting the apostles' doctrine,) would be shown to be judged and condemned as a criminal, and be gradually expelled from his usurped dominion over mankind. (Note, xii. 31.) These miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost left unbelievers, both Jews and Gentiles, without excuse, and bound them over to the day of judgment, as determined favourers of Satan's cause, in opposition to that of Christ; and they doubtless were the means of conviction to great numbers, in different parts of the world, that Jesus was the Son of God, and the Saviour of lost sinners. (*Marg. Ref.*) Yet the principal meaning of the words seems to refer to the general internal operation of the Holy Spirit

xiv. 30. xv. 15.
Acts i. 3.
u Mark iv. 33.
u Cor. iii. 1, 2.
Heb. v. 11-12.
xix. 17. xv. 26.
1 John iv. 6.
x. xiv. 26. 1 Cor.
ii. 10-13. Eph. iv. 7-15. 1 John ii. 20, 27.

12 I have 'yet many things to say unto you, but ^u ye cannot bear them now.

13 Howbeit when he, ^{*} the Spirit of truth, is come, ^v he will guide you into

all truth: ^z for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, ^{that} shall he speak: and ^a he will shew you things to come.

12. 1 Tim. iv. 1-3. 2 Tim. iii. 1-6. 2 Pet. ii. 1, &c. Rev. i. 19. vi-xlii.

on the minds and hearts of men, in every age and country, when he leads them to believe in Jesus Christ for salvation. He deeply convinces them of many things, concerning the evil and desert of sin, and the sinfulness of numberless thoughts, words, actions, and omissions, which before they had scarcely thought of; especially he convicts and detects the sinfulness of their own conduct, their supposed virtues, and their hearts, by discovering the glory of God to their souls, showing them their obligations and relations to him, and turning their reflections to the spirituality of the law, to the hateful nature of transgression, to their own past lives, to their present behaviour, and to their inward thoughts, desires, and motives. Thus the veil of ignorance, pride, and partiality, being removed, they are brought without reserve to condemn themselves, and to plead guilty before God. He convinces them also concerning the nature of righteousness, and also the righteousness of God in the sentence denounced against sinners: he leads them to realize and anticipate the day of judgment, and to seek deliverance from the condemnation to be then denounced against ungodly men. But, especially, the Holy Ghost shows sinners the evil of unbelief, and neglect of Christ and his salvation. Perhaps they once thought this meritorious, at least supposed there was no great evil in it: but now they perceive that it arises from pride, love of sin, enmity to God, and the most rebellious state of the heart imaginable: they find, that it implies the greatest contempt of the divine authority, justice, truth, wisdom, and mercy, that can be conceived; that it is a rooted aversion to be reconciled unto God; and in short, that unbelief is in some respects the source, and as it were the substance, of all other sins; the most affronting and ruinous of all the crimes, of which men are or can be guilty; and ranks those, who deliberately persist in it, with those implacable enemies of God, that hated and crucified the incarnate Redeemer, when he appeared on earth. In connexion with these discoveries, the Holy Spirit discloses to those whom he influences, that righteousness of God, which is revealed to faith, as the ground of a sinner's justification; even the obedience unto death of the divine Redeemer as our Surety. He convinces them concerning the suitability and sufficiency of this righteousness for the end proposed; he makes them sensible, that in this way God is righteous in justifying sinners, as well as glorious in mercy and in all other perfections. He discovers to them how the law is thus magnified, and how real faith in the righteousness of Christ must ever be accompanied with hatred of sin, with humility, love of God, and the beginning of all holy dispositions. He convinces them that Christ's ascension to the right hand of the Father fully proves the ransom accepted, and the righteousness finished, through which believers were to be justified; and therefore there is no need for him to appear again on earth, till he shall come to judge the world. The Holy Spirit likewise gives men a realizing apprehension of a future

judgment, (which few so believe, as to be influenced in their daily conduct by the expectation of it,) and convinces them of many things before unthought of, concerning the nature, measure, and consequences of that solemn season. He shows them, that the prince of this world, who is already judged and condemned, will then be consigned, with all his angels, and all who adhere to him in opposition to Christ, to everlasting punishment; but that all, who truly believe in Christ, and become his disciples and servants, will then be adjudged righteous through his merits, (their good works being adduced as evidences of their faith,) and so be admitted into the regions of everlasting glory and felicity. Under these realizing convictions, he teaches men to consider their own state, character, and actions; anticipating that decisive season, by daily instituting a judgment upon themselves, whether they belong to Christ, or not; in which they desire to consider all the evidence then to be adduced, that they may be satisfied, on scriptural grounds, that their state is good, and that they are prepared to meet their heart-searching Judge, in the endearing character of a gracious Saviour and Friend. As these things, with what follows, (14, 15,) evidently contain the substance of the distinguishing work of the Holy Spirit, in illuminating, convincing, converting, comforting, and sanctifying believers of every age and nation, by which he gives success to the Gospel in the world; and as it so aptly answers to the words before us, there can be no doubt but that our Lord had respect to it in them, and not merely, nor principally, to the miraculous influences of the Holy Spirit, in the days of the apostles. It is, however, further worthy of notice, that a vast proportion of the human race have, since the pouring out of the Holy Spirit after our Lord's ascension, been led to form such sentiments concerning sin, righteousness, and a future judgment, as the world in general at that time had not the most remote conception of: so that a far higher standard of morals has been fixed, and a more general and explicit persuasion of a future season of retribution has prevailed, through numerous and populous nations, even among nominal Christians, than were at all thought of in any nation, except Israel, nay, than the bulk of the Jews themselves admitted. But were the convictions of all men concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment, as deep, abiding, distinct and efficacious, as those of real believers are, the grand hinderance to their becoming true Christians would be removed. So that these convictions of the Holy Spirit are the very things wanting to men in every part of the world, and all that is wanting, as introductory to his rendering Christ glorious in their eyes, and precious to their hearts: and the success of ministers and missionaries will bear an exact proportion to the measure in which "the Holy Spirit is poured out" on the people, to produce them. This therefore should be the ground of all our hopes, and the subject of our prayers, in every endeavour to win souls.

iii. 32. vii. 16-18. viii. 36. xii. 49.
a Joel ii. 28. Acts ii. 17. xi. 28. xix. 23. xxv. 2-4. 11. xlviii. 24. 2 Thes. i. 5-8.

heart shall rejoice, * and your joy no man taketh from you.

23 And in that day ye shall *ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing * in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, * that your joy may be full.

25 These things have I spoken unto you in *proverbs: the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, * but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.

V. 16.—22. In a few hours the Lord Jesus would be removed from the sight of the disciples, by his death and burial; but after a short time they would see him again, as risen from the dead, because he was visibly to ascend to the Father in their presence, that they might testify that event to the world. * Because I go to eternal glory; whence I shall be more efficaciously present than ever before. For then you shall experience Who, and how great, I am: which is a more adequate view of Christ, than that which relates to his bodily presence. (Bez.)

Some explain the passage, of the short space which would intervene before the disciples should see their Lord in glory. But the context seems to determine the meaning to the first interpretation. The disciples, however, did not understand his meaning; not being yet aware that he was so soon to die, and to rise again, and then to ascend to the Father. But he knew their perplexity, and therefore declared to them, that indeed the most overwhelming sorrows were coming on them, whilst the world, or the multitude of his enemies, would rejoice and exult, as if they had obtained a final victory over him and his cause, when they had nailed him to the cross, and seen him expire upon it. Yet the sorrow of his disciples would soon be turned into joy; even as the woman's pangs of travail are, by the sight of her infant, and her satisfaction in beholding it. Thus they, (as well as he,) would have sorrow; but he would certainly see them again after his resurrection, and then they would have the most cordial, solid, and substantial joy communicated to them, which would not be destroyed by his ascension into heaven, as the Holy Spirit would be their comforter; nor would the malice of men or devils, nor any of their trials and sufferings in life or death, ever deprive them of it. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 23, 24. When Jesus should ascend into heaven, and the Holy Ghost should come on the apostles, their views would be so enlarged, and their faith and hope so confirmed, that they would not have occasion to ask him the meaning of any of his words, as before they had been desirous of doing. (19.) They would not, therefore, want his personal presence, which they then thought indispensably necessary; for they might be assured, that whatever

26 At that day ye shall ask in my name; and I say not unto you, * that I will pray the Father for you:

27 For *the Father himself loveth you, *because ye have loved me, *and have believed that I came out from God.

28 I *came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, *I leave the world, and go to the Father.

29 His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest not *in proverb.

30 Now *we are sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: *by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

they asked the Father, in his name, would be granted them. Hitherto they had not been used to pray in his name, or through his intercession; that way of access had not explicitly been established, nor had they clearly understood those types, by which it had been shadowed forth under the old dispensation. They had therefore prayed to the God of Abraham, pleading his mercy, promises, and covenant. But the way into the holiest would soon be thrown open, by the sacrifice, resurrection, ascension, and intercession of Christ; and then they would learn to plead his righteousness and atonement as the ground of their hopes, and to come through him, as their great High Priest and Advocate, to the mercy-seat of God; and in this way, enlarging and multiplying their petitions, their joy and consolation would be abundant and complete. To suppose that Christ meant to forbid them to address him in prayer, when he said, "Ye shall ask me nothing," is a direct censure on the apostles and primitive Christians, when acting under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit. The disciples had been used to inquire of their Lord, as Man, in all their difficulties; but this would speedily and finally be terminated, and they would be taught to apply to God by prayer, through his mediation. But to address the Father in the name of Christ, or to address the Son as God dwelling in human nature, and reconciling the world to himself, must be equivalent, if indeed the Father and the Son are One Deity.

V. 25—30. Our Lord had set before the apostles, during his whole ministry, as well as in this discourse, the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, in parables, or in short and weighty sentences, the import of which they did not fully understand; but after his resurrection he intended to lay aside all such obscurity and reserve, and plainly to instruct them in those things which related to the perfections, truth, and will of the Father, and the way of access to him. Then they would learn to pray in his name; but though they would present their petitions through his intercession, as the honourable way in which the Father would grant them, yet he did not mean that there would be any need for him to importune the Father in their behalf, as if he were reluctant to grant their requests; seeing the Father also loved them, and delighted to do them

CHAP. XVII.

Jesus prays the Father to glorify him, that he might glorify the Father, and give eternal life to his disciples, 1—5; to preserve the apostles in unity of faith, after his ascension, 6—12; and from the world and all evil, 13—16; and to

sanctify them by the truth, 17—19. He intercedes for them, and all who should believe through their word, that they might be united in love, admitted to the most intimate communion with the Father and the Son, and be brought to share his glory in heaven, 20—26.

can see, that this was the case with the apostles; the atonement, the ascension, and intercession of the Redeemer, and the presence of the Comforter, were not only more desirable than Christ's personal presence, but they were absolutely necessary to them, and to us all, in order to salvation: yet no removal of a beloved relation, a Christian friend, or faithful minister, can possibly appear to us to be so much as comparable to that loss, which the apostles supposed that they must inevitably sustain, when their beloved Lord was removed from them.

V. 7—15.

Every professed Christian ought to inquire whether the Holy Spirit hath begun a good work in his heart? When he comes to be a Comforter, he always occasions a temporary sorrow and deep humiliation, and these are often attended with terror and distress. For without deep convictions of sin, and a clear discovery of our guilt and danger, we shall never understand the value of Christ's salvation; but when we are brought to a just estimate of our own character and duties, we begin to perceive the preciousness of the Redeemer's obedience, atonement, and intercession. Then we also see the sinfulness of unbelief, and the neglect of the Gospel; and if at any time we are tempted to despair of mercy, through a sense of our own vileness, we perceive that this would be a more fatal and atrocious offence, than any or all our other transgressions. Thus we learn to value and rely upon Christ for righteousness and for sanctification, and to prepare to meet him when he shall come to judgment, when the prince of this world, and all that continue his servants, will be cast into the lake of fire. And whoever he be, all over the earth, who is "delivered from the power of "darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear "Son," he experimentally knows what it is to be thus "convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." This is essential to true religion, and to salvation through Him, "who was made sin for us, though he knew no sin," "that we might be made the righteousness of God in "him." If then this be the peculiar work of the Holy Spirit, as the great Agent in applying the redemption of the Son of God, they, who are instruments and "workers together with him," should use proper means for producing these needful convictions; they should often and particularly lay open the holy law of God, as the ministration of condemnation; they should show the evil of sin, the way of justification by faith in Christ, the guilt and ruinous consequences of unbelief, and the solemn transactions and awful event of "the day of judgment and "perdition of ungodly men." On such subjects, all who would be honoured as instruments in converting sinners should be frequent, copious, alarming, encouraging, and

distinguishing. But in matters more disputable and less essential, they would do well, after the example of Christ, not to force them upon their auditories, before they are able to bear them, or to make a good use of them, but gradually, and as the Spirit of Truth removes prejudices and darkness from the mind, and enables them to receive them. Whilst we attend to the sure word of prophecy, and wait for the day-dawn and the day-star to arise in our hearts, we should carefully observe that the Holy Spirit comes forth from the Father, to glorify Christ among men. We need not then wonder, that so many deny his Deity and his atonement, or treat his prophetic or kingly authority with neglect or contempt; for they imagine that the work of the Holy Spirit was confined to the primitive ages, and that all dependence upon his influences at present is enthusiasm! Could they ascertain this position, it would follow, that Jesus could be glorified only in the primitive times! And in proportion as men overlook, or do not depend upon, expect, and pray for, the influences of the Holy Spirit, Christ hath always been neglected and dishonoured, even by those who call themselves his disciples. On the other hand, if men pretend to be guided and influenced by the Holy Spirit, and yet do not honour Christ, but either treat his word with contempt, or place their dependence elsewhere than on his atoning blood, or make him the minister of sin, and disgrace him by their unholy lives, it is plain that they are deceivers, or deceived. Where this sacred Teacher and Comforter resides, he shows the Saviour, in all his offices, to be glorious and precious; he leads a man to trust and glory in him; he constrains him, by love, to devote himself to his service, and to honour him by his life; and by the improvement of his talents to recommend and promote his cause; he enables him to see, that all things that the Father hath are the Son's also; that in honouring him he honours the Father that sent him, and that all the power and perfection of Deity are in Christ, for the completion of that design of love for which he suffered on the cross. We should therefore have more admiring views of, and more lively affections towards, our glorious Redeemer, did we more pray for, and depend on the Holy Spirit, and were we more careful neither to grieve him by our sins, nor to quench his influences by our negligence. Thus we should learn to rejoice in Christ Jesus amidst all our tribulations.

V. 16—22.

For a little while believers must be absent from their beloved Saviour, and they may be often called to lament for sin, and to go through manifold tribulations, whilst the world around them rejoices in carnal mirth and destructive prosperity, or perhaps in the success of atrocious iniquities! But *their* joys and the believer's sorrows are alike

1 John 16 xviii. 9. that thou gavest me I have kept, and thou shouldst keep them from the none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; * that the scripture might be fulfilled.

13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, * that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that

thou shouldst keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, * that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

20 For I have sent them into the world, and they have not kept thy word, and they have hated me, and they will hate him that sent me, and they will kill me.

V. 11, 12. Jesus was at the very point of leaving the world, (as to his personal presence in human nature;) but whilst he rejoiced in the thought of going to the Father, he most affectionately regarded his disciples, who were to continue in the world, in the midst of snares, dangers, and tribulations. He therefore interceded with God, as his "Holy Father," (referring to all his moral excellencies, as engaged to effectuate the purposes of the new covenant, especially in the sanctification of believers,) that he would keep them, *through his own name*; that is, according to his power and perfection, and for the glory of his name, or in the faith, love, and worship of himself, that they might be most intimately united in judgment, affection, doctrine, worship, and labours, even according to the inexplicable union of the Father and the Son in the Deity, or of God and man in the Person of Christ. He had hitherto, by his presence and instructions, preserved them in this manner; none of those who had been given to him had departed from him, or run into the ways of destruction, save that Judas, who was emphatically a child of wrath, a son of perdition, had been left to perish according to the predictions of the Scripture concerning him. (*Marg. Ref.*) If we understand "the giving to Christ," in this verse, as before, (6—9,) then Judas is not mentioned as an exception, but by way of opposition, or distinction, as the woman of Sarepta is distinguished from the widows of Israel, and Naaman, the Syrian, from the lepers in Israel. In the preceding verses, they who were given to Christ, are stated to have kept his word, and believed in him; but Judas had always been a hypocrite, and was now become a traitor and an apostate; and therefore Christ could not mean to include him in that number. So that if in this verse we should understand by *those given to Christ*, such as were given to him to be his apostles, without any reference to "the election of grace," we cannot explain the preceding verses in that sense, because they are verified in none but true believers, which Judas never had been.

V. 13—16. Before Jesus ascended to his glory, he spake these things in his exhortation and intercession before the apostles, that they and their brethren (and indeed all who should duly regard this record of them) might have his joy fulfilled in them; that is, the joy which he conferred on them, similar to that which he possessed in the assurance of his Father's love, and in the prospect of

his glory. "That the joy they had hitherto from my love to them, my presence with them, and care of them, may, in my absence, be increased by the presence of that Spirit with them, whose fruits are joy and peace; yea, by whom I, though absent in the body, am still present with them." (*Whitby.*) They would greatly need this support, as he had given the word of the Father to them, that they might preach and profess it before men. The world had already begun to hate them on that account, because they no longer were of the same character or party with them, but opposite in every thing, according as he had not been of the world, but contrary to it in his whole doctrine and conduct. He did not pray, however, that the apostles and disciples should be removed out of the world, in order that they might escape the effects of the rage, contempt, and enmity of ungodly men, as they had a great work to do, for the glory of God, and the benefit of mankind, which they must continue on earth to finish; at the same time they must ripen for their exalted state in heaven, by passing through manifold trials and tribulations. But he interceded in their behalf, that the Father would preserve them from the evil; that is, from being corrupted by the contagious influence of the world, or tempted by its smiles or frowns to apostatize from him, through the fatal effects of the remains of sin in their hearts, and by the power and subtlety of Satan, that evil one; (*Note, Matt. vi. 13.*) that so they might pass safely and honourably through the world, as through an enemy's country, in some good measure as he had done.

V. 17—19. The apostles at this time were actually converted, called out of the ungodly world, and engaged in a work diametrically opposite to all its sentiments, inclinations, and pursuits; but they needed to be more completely purified, renewed, and consecrated to God, for their most important office. Our Lord therefore prayed, that they might be sanctified through the revealed truth of God, every part of which is holy in its nature and tendency; the means of the sanctification by the Spirit, and thus of rendering the man of God completely furnished for every good work, (*Note, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.*) The commandments, doctrines, promises, warnings, and examples of scripture, are suited to discover the evil of sin, and to detect it in all its forms and actings; to impress the mind with fervent affections towards God and holiness, and to furnish directions, motives, and encouragements, for every

20 ¶ Neither 'pray I for these alone, but ' for them also which shall believe on me through their word.

21 That ' they all may be one; ^h as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: ⁱ that

the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And ' the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; ^l that they may be one, even as we are one:

23 ¶ I in them, and thou in me, that they may be ^m made perfect in one; and

thing that is good and excellent, and thus to transform the believer's soul into its own holy nature, and to induce him to that dedication of all his powers to God, in the performance of his proper work, which is here especially intended. For our Lord immediately referred to his sending forth of his apostles to publish his Gospel in the world, and their being wholly consecrated and set apart to that service, and prepared to persevere in it, amidst all hardships, perils, and sufferings, unto death itself: even as he had been sent by the Father into the world, and had willingly set apart himself and his whole human nature, as consecrated by the Holy Ghost to his most arduous work, and was now about to give himself an atoning sacrifice for sin, for the sake of his apostles and disciples, and for the glory of God in their salvation. In consequence of this, they also would be sanctified by the truth, and consecrated to the work of their ministry, that they might promote the same cause in the world by their labours, writings, example, and patient sufferings, and by the martyrdom of many of them, for their testimony to his doctrine. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 20, 21. In these verses Christ interceded for all Christians in every age, to the end of the world; and as such, they are replete with instruction and consolation to us. Doubtless, the effectual calling of sinners to faith in Christ is effected, in answer to his continual intercession in heaven, of which this prayer is a specimen and example; but none are warranted to take encouragement from that consideration, till they, in some measure, believe his word; he therefore was pleased here to pray for them, as those *who would believe on him* through the word of his apostles, rather than as those *who were the elect of God*. The Gospel was especially committed to them, and from them it hath been transmitted through succeeding generations to us, and will be to posterity, to the end of the world. 'The true and saving faith comes from hearing the doctrine of the apostles; and that is the doctrine of the apostles which leads us to Christ alone.' (Hesa) This venerable writer had principally in view the additions and alterations made by popes and councils, and by the prevalence of superstition; but the modern supposed improvements of science, philosophy, and human reasonings, carry vast numbers as far from Christ, alone, and from the apostolical doctrine, as popery itself did. It should also be observed, from our Lord's words, that his religion may certainly be found entire and unadulterated in the writings of his apostles, and of those who by their sanction peened the other parts of the New Testament. Indeed, where else can we look for the words of the apostles? What standard of their doctrine have we, if the New Testament be not the standard? The miracles which they wrought proved the truth of Christianity; but if they were not inspired infallibly to communicate to the world the religion of

Jesus, without addition, adulteration, or omission, where shall we for certainty learn the *nature* of that religion? Or how be *sure* that we are not deluded by some misrepresentation? It is worthy of observation, that the absurd claims of popes or councils, in this respect, and the more plausible claims of such moderns as want to improve Christianity by human reason, are maintained by the same vain supposition, namely, that the Scripture of itself is either insufficient, or in some degree uncertain, or too obscure to answer the purpose. In behalf of all this company of believers, our Lord especially prayed, that they might be united together in the closest bonds of love, as one Body, under one Head, animated by one Soul, according to the incomprehensible union before-mentioned, and in virtue of their union with Christ, and the Father in him, through the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. In some respects this request is granted in behalf of all true Christians, in proportion to the degree of their illumination and sanctification; but the more closely they are united in judgment and affection, and the more entirely they live in peace and harmony, professing the same doctrine, and worshipping God as with one heart and one mouth, the clearer evidence do they afford of the divine original and excellency of the Gospel, to the conviction of the world around them. On the other hand, the more they who in so many respects are *one*, and who are agreed in the most important matters, differ and dispute about things of inferior moment, the more ambiguous and uncertain doth the truth and excellency of Christianity appear. Men are apt to say, 'It will be soon enough for them to embrace the Gospel, when its professors are agreed among themselves in what it consists;' and they who are not aware of the advantage which infidels and ungodly men have made of the divisions and controversies among Christians, against the common interest of our holy religion, must have been very little conversant in their writings, and made but few observations on the discourses and conduct of mankind. Mere nominal Christians, indeed, give the most extensive occasion to the objections, but real believers are far from being sufficiently circumspect in this particular. The union which prevailed among Christians when the Gospel was first propagated, as springing from the communion of the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, evidenced to the world the divine original of Christianity, in a manner not much less convincing than the miraculous powers of the same Spirit, conferred on them through the laying on of the hands of the apostles. And as believers are mentioned by our Lord, without limitation of age or country, the evidence to the truth of Christianity, by the miraculous gifts vouchsafed in the primitive Church, cannot be exclusively intended, as some appear to explain both these and the two following verses.

21. xxi. 25. * that the world may know that thou hast sent me, * and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

24 Father, * I will that they also, whom thou has given me, be with me where I am; * that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: * for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

V. 22, 23. Our Lord could not here mean his personal or mediatorial glory: but either that glory, which was given to him to be conferred on his disciples, or the glory of bearing his image, declaring his truth, working stupendous miracles in confirmation of it, labouring and suffering in the same cause, and enduring enmity and opposition from men, for standing up for the honour of God in the world, and finally of sharing his heavenly glory. Thus he gave to them the glory of concurring in that grand design, for which he lived and died; and of being anointed, in their measure, by the Holy Spirit for that service: and so be made complete, as one body in Christ, and in the Father through him. And all men might see, by their doctrine and behaviour, that they were a holy and happy people; that their religion was of heavenly original, because of a heavenly nature and tendency; and that they were the proper objects of the divine love for Christ's sake, and according to the Father's love to his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased."—(Bp. Hall.) Whatever differences prevailed in the primitive Church, there is not the smallest trace of any real disunion among the apostles, except for a while, concerning the admission of uncircumcised Gentiles into the Church; and that matter was soon amicably settled. They were all along, as far as we can learn, "perfectly joined together in the same mind and judgment;" and this by an abundant measure of the illuminating and sanctifying Spirit of God: as well as that infallible inspiration, by which they delivered the doctrine of their Lord to mankind. This was an especial honour conferred on them; and a remarkable accomplishment of this intercession, considered as a prophecy.

V. 24. The language of this verse has been considered by many expositors, ancient and modern, as a *claim*, grounded on a covenant, the terms of which would in a few hours be perfectly fulfilled. Our Lord does not therefore say, *I pray, or beseech*; but *I will*; as acting by authority, and as One with the Father. It is not, however, certain, that more than a fervent importunate desire was intended; and it is not advisable to adduce doubtful texts in proof of a disputed point of doctrine. Yet the language at least implies, that this concluding plea was peculiarly near the heart of the heavenly Advocate, and there can be no doubt but it will infallibly be granted. And what is the import of it? That the whole company which had been given him, and would in due time believe him, should at length be safely brought to heaven, the

25 O ' righteous Father, * the world hath not known thee: * but I have known thee, and * these have known that thou hast sent me.

26 And * I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: * that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, * and I in them.

place of his special presence as God, and whither as man he was about to ascend; that there they might behold and contemplate his glory, as their beloved Friend and Brother, and in this beatific vision find their felicity. For in this respect, as well as on account of his divine excellency, the Father loved him before the foundation of the world; because he most perfectly delighted in his mediatorial undertaking and work, as fully adequate to all the purposes of his glory in the salvation of his people.

V. 25, 26. These last verses primarily related to the apostles. Jesus addressed God as his "righteous Father," not only because of his essential justice, and the righteousness of his moral government, but as righteous in justifying sinners through his obedience unto death, and in performing the engagements of his everlasting covenant. The world had not indeed known God, in respect of this righteousness, and his glorious excellencies; for it was in a state of rebellion against him, and exposed to his just vengeance on that account. But as he, his beloved Son, had perfectly known him, as the apostles had assuredly believed that the Father had sent him, and as he had declared, and would still further declare, the name or perfections of God to them by his doctrine, which would be confirmed by his Spirit; so they were and would be distinguished from the world, by their knowledge of God and all its happy effects. (3.) in order, that, being One with him, and as members of his mystical body, the love of the Father to him might be communicated to them, and abide with them also; and that thus, being joined to him as one spirit, they might be filled with all the fulness of God, and come as near the Fountain of all felicity as creatures possibly could do. After all our endeavours to explain this chapter, we must allow that our thoughts are swallowed up in those depths of wisdom and love, and in those mysteries of the Godhead, with which it is replete; and that the light of heaven alone can fully clear it up to us.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—5.

Fervent prayer forms the proper conclusion of religious instructions, and the preparation for approaching trials: and our eyes and hearts should habitually be lifted up to our heavenly Father, that he would glorify himself in and by us; prosper our endeavours to honour him; support us in resisting temptations, and carry us through all difficulties to his heavenly kingdom. But all our supplications must be presented through the intercession of our great High-Priest, who "hath power over all flesh," and who giveth eternal life to all his chosen people, and will con-

CHAP. XVIII.

Jesus retires to a garden, and Judas betrays him, 1—3. At his word the officers, soldiers, and company, fall to the ground, 4—6. Jesus, yielding up himself, requires that his disciples should be dismissed, 7—9. Peter cuts off Malchus's ear, and Jesus reproves him, 10, 11. Jesus is bound, and led away to Annas, and then to

Caiaphas, 12—14. Peter is admitted into the palace, and denies Christ, 15—18. Jesus is examined by the high priest, and struck by an officer, 19—24. Peter again twice denies him, 25—27. Jesus is brought before Pilate, and declares that his kingdom is not of this world, 28—37. Pilate testifies to his innocence, and offers to release him; but the Jews prefer Barabbas, 38—40.

sign all unbelievers to everlasting punishment. For however men may deny, deride, or overlook it, eternal life can only be obtained by sinners through the knowledge of God, as revealed in his Son Jesus, and through his meritorious obedience unto death; in which he glorified the Father on earth, and finished the work that was given "him to do." By leaving "the glory which he had with "the Father before the world was," by his humiliation on earth, by his ascension into heaven to be reinstated in his glory, and by the doctrine which he committed to his holy apostles, he hath manifested the name and glory of God to man; and all believers "behold that glory as in a glass," "till they are changed into the same image, from glory to "glory, by the Spirit of the Lord." This knowledge widely differs from any inefficacious notions which puff up men with pride: for it is humbling, transforming, and sanctifying, the source of all spiritual worship and holy obedience; the hope, the evidence, the earnest of eternal life, and the meetness for heavenly felicity.

V. 6—12.



The special regard of the Saviour to those who were given to him out of the world cannot be overlooked by the attentive reader; and the things spoken of them are not peculiar to the apostles, but take in all who receive and keep his word, who are firmly persuaded that his doctrine and his works were from the Father, and who believe in him for the salvation of their souls. For these persons, especially, he came into the world; for them he obeyed and suffered; for them he rose again and reigned; for them he continually intercedes, and not for the world at large: in them he will eternally be glorified with the Father, whose also they are, as all things that the Father hath are the Son's likewise. No trembling sinner, however, who desires to approach the Father, and is consciously unworthy to come in his own name, needs to be discouraged; for the Saviour is both able and willing to "save to the uttermost all of them, who come to God by him." These convictions and desires are hopeful tokens; and when they lead to the throne of grace, through faith in his word and reliance on his intercession, the express promises of God become a man's security, and the work already wrought in him evidences that he hath been "chosen unto salvation," "through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the "truth;" nor can any one, whatever he professes or preaches, know his election, except by that "faith which "worketh by love," and by its evident fruits. For many

have called Christ Lord and Master, and have seemed to be the children and servants of God, who have at length proved "sons of perdition," after the example of Judas. Such examples should excite us to serious self-examination and fervent prayer; but they should not distress the humble believer, who, though "he cannot do the things that he "would," is yet conscious of integrity in his professed repentance and faith in Christ, and desire of living to his glory. These are of that number, who, through the intercession of Christ, shall be kept by the power of God, to the glory of his name, and in his worship and service, through faith, unto eternal salvation. None of them ever were or ever will be lost; for the sons of perdition only seemed to be of them, but they never were one with them in judgment, disposition, and affection.

V. 13—19.



The true disciples of Christ live at present in an ensnaring world, which hates and despises them; yet the recollection of his words, and the experience of his faithfulness, may fill them with holy joy in him and in each other, amid all their tribulations. They should indeed be willing to die, but not impatiently desire it; for their loving Advocate does not intercede for their immediate removal out of the world, but that they may be kept from the evil of it. They must, however, carefully remember, that they are not left here to pursue any of the same objects which the men of the world are pursuing, but to glorify God, to serve their generation, to finish their work, and to be perfected through sufferings, after the example of the Captain of their salvation. They should therefore hope and pray, that the grace which hath separated them from the world may preserve them from the evil of it, and from the snares of the wicked one: they should seek to be sanctified more and more, through the word of truth, that they may be devoted unreservedly to the service of Him, who, "through the eternal Spirit "offered himself without spot to God," for their sakes, and "to purge their consciences from dead works, that "they might serve the living God:" and they should carefully examine whether the doctrines which they hold have a sanctifying effect upon their own hearts and lives. For as all divine truth is of a holy nature, if our sentiments do not make us hate all sin, and long and pray for holiness, we may be sure, either that they are not divine truth, or that we do not receive them by a living faith, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

n. xlii. 31. Ec.
xiv-xvii.
k. xvi. 31. Matt.
xvi. 36. Mark.
xiv. 32. Luke.
xvi. 29. 40.
2 Sam. xv. 23.
1 Kings xv. 13.
2 Kings xxii. 6.
12 2Chr. xv. 16.
15. 14. Jer.
xxv. 10. Kidron.
d. 23. Gen. ii. 15.
ii. 24.
2 Mark. xi. 12.
Luke xxi. 37.
1 xxi. 2. 27-30.
Matt. xxvi. 47.
53 Mark. xiv. 42.
13. 48. Luke.
xxii. 47. Acts. i.
16.
12. Gr. Ps. iii.
1. 2. xxii. 12. 23.
Ps. xli. 1. xix. 23.
Matt. xvi. 21.
xxii. 22, 23. xx.
15. 16. xxvi. 2.
21. 31. Mark. x.
26. 34. Luke.
xxiii. 31-33. xxiv. 6. 7. 44. Acts. iv. 24-26. xx. 22, 23. — 138. 1 Kings xviii. 10. 14.
— 16. Neh. vi. 11. Ps. iii. 6. xxvii. 3. Prov. xxviii. 1. 1 Pet. iv. 1.

WHEN Jesus had ^a spoken these words, ^b he went forth with his disciples over ^c the brook Cedron, where was ^d a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

2 And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place; ^e for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples.

3 ^f Judas then, having received ^g a band of men, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns, and torches, and weapons.

4 Jesus therefore, ^h knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, ⁱ Whom seek ye?

5 They answered him, ^j Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, ^k they went backward, and fell to the ground.

7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he. If therefore ye seek me, ^l let these go their way:

9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, ^m Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

V. 20.—26.

Blessed be God, that we sinners, in these remote regions and distant ages, are interested in this prayer of our Redeemer, if we indeed believe in him according to the word of his holy apostles! May we continually recollect, that union and communion with the Father and the Son, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and union, peace, and harmony with one another, formed the substance of our Redeemer's prayer for all his future disciples to the end of time. Let us then "endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;" and let us pray for a larger portion of divine illumination in behalf of ourselves and of all our brethren, that we may all be united in one mind and judgment. Let us also beg of God to bestow on us far more abundance of holy love; that we may amicably differ in opinion, where we cannot see things exactly in the same light. Thus a spirit of mutual candour, forbearance, and active self-denying kindness, among all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, might convince the world, that we are of one heart and soul, (though somewhat separated through external circumstances;) and that we are all soldiers in one army, (though not exactly marshalled and disciplined in the same manner;) that we are indeed fighting against sin, the world, and the devil; and that we will not be seduced to turn our arms against each other, (as hath too often been the case,) to the joy and triumph of our insulting enemies. Thus we shall best manifest the truth and excellency of our religion, and the divine authority of its great Author. Thus we shall experience more intimate union of soul, and more sweet and sanctifying communion with the God of our salvation, and with his saints. Thus we shall have a measure of the Redeemer's glory conferred on us, by being conformed to his image, united with his people, and hated by those only, who hate him and the Father that sent him. Thus, at length, we shall surely be with him for ever, to behold his glory, and enjoy, as one with him, that love, with which the Father loved him before the foundation of the world; and shall possess the most complete felicity, in the full knowledge of that glorious God, whom the world hath not known; but in knowing whom angels and arch-angels

find blessedness, of which in our present state we can frame no adequate conception.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII. V. 1—3. (Notes, &c. Matt. xxvi. 30—50. Mark xiv. 36—45. Luke xxii. 39—58.) Cedron, or Kidron, was a small brook to the east of Jerusalem, over which David, (the type of Christ,) passed weeping, when he fled for fear of Absalom: (2 Sam. xv. 23—30.) It derived its name from a shady and gloomy valley through which it ran. It is probable that the garden, to which Jesus retired, belonged to some friend, who was glad to afford him and his disciples this quiet retreat. But Judas, knowing his custom and purpose of resorting thither, had procured a cohort of Roman soldiers, as well as the officers of the Jewish rulers, in order to apprehend him: and they came with every preparation, which would have been necessary if they had attempted to seize some desperate criminal, who would use every method to oppose or to escape them; otherwise lanterns and torches seem not to have been needful, when the moon was at the full. The first Adam fell in a garden; the second Adam began the last scene of his atoning sufferings in a garden likewise.

V. 4—9. Our Lord, though fully aware of all the inexpressible sufferings that were coming upon him, and every circumstance of them, went forth to meet his rude assailants with the most perfect serenity and fortitude! It is particularly remarked, that Judas stood with the company when Jesus declared himself to be the person whom they sought: so that he too was constrained to go backward, and fall to the ground: yet he was not dismayed by that further display of the power of his Lord, but dared to proceed with his horrid purpose! No doubt Jesus could with equal ease have struck the whole company dead in a moment: and it is wonderful, that the scribes, priests, and other Jews, did not recollect the companies, which were destroyed by fire from heaven when they came to take Elijah; (Note, 2 Kings i.) and that they should venture to renew their attempt after this unexpected repulse. But perhaps they ascribed it to the same power, by which some supposed that he wrought his miracles; and,

p. 56. Matt. xxvi.
51—54. Mark
xiv. 30, 47—Luke
xxii. 39, 49—51

10 Then ^v Simon Peter having a sword, drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

q. 26. 2 Cor. vi.
7. & 4 Eph. vi.
11—17.
† 15. 1889 8 Ex.
xxii. 31. Matt.
xx. 22, 23. xxvi.
59. 42. Mark x.
30. 29. xiv. 25.
56. Luke xxii.
42. Heb. xii. 2.
x. xi. ai. 42. xii.
27. 28. xv. 10.
xvii. 24. xx. 17.
Luke xii. 30.
Rom. viii. 18.
116b xii. 5—

11 Then said Jesus unto Peter, ^v Put up thy sword into the sheath: ^v the cup which ^v my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

† 10. Matt. xxvi.
57. Mark xiv. 53.
Luke xxii. 51.
† Acts xxi. 31. 37.
xii. 24—28.
xxii. 10, 17. bc.
Gr.

12 Then ^v the band, and ^v the captain, and officers of the Jews, took Jesus, and ^v bound him,

x. Gen. xxii. 9. xi.
57. Mark xiv. 53.
Ps. cxviii. 27.
Matt. xxvii. 2.
Mark xv. 1.
Luke xii. 2. Acts
iv. 16.
x. xi. 51.
† 10. Matt. xxvi.
57. Mark xiv. 53.
Luke xxii. 51.
† Acts xxi. 31. 37.
xii. 24—28.
xxii. 10, 17. bc.
Gr.

13 And led him away to ^v Annas first: (for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest ^v that same year*)

14 Now ^a Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

15 ¶ And ^b Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. That disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

16 But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

x. Gen. xxii. 9. xi.
57. Mark xiv. 53.
Ps. cxviii. 27.
Matt. xxvii. 2.
Mark xv. 1.
Luke xii. 2. Acts
iv. 16.
x. xi. 51.
† 10. Matt. xxvi.
57. Mark xiv. 53.
Luke xxii. 51.
† Acts xxi. 31. 37.
xii. 24—28.
xxii. 10, 17. bc.
Gr.

if so, they might deem their preservation a peculiar interposition of God in their favour. Our Lord, however, was pleased to proceed no further against them, but only observed, that as they sought him, who was ready to yield up himself, they should let his disciples go away unmolested; which they were over-ruled to comply with. This conduct of Christ accorded to the word, that he had before spoken, (xvii. 12.) for he thus not only showed the most tender concern to their temporal safety, as given to him to be his apostles, but he kept them, as true but weak believers, from those temptations which they were not then prepared to withstand. This tended also to their spiritual preservation.

V. 10—14. John alone mentions Peter and Malchus; probably Peter at the time this was written had suffered martyrdom. It is wonderful, and it must have been the effect of a secret divine interposition, that the officers and soldiers permitted the disciples to withdraw quietly, after this violent resistance. The captain spoken of was commander of a thousand men, though, probably, only a small part of that number of soldiers was present. ^v At the time of the ^v passover, it was customary for the Roman president to send a whole band of a thousand men, for a guard to ^v the temple; the captain of which band is here called ^v *Χιλιάρχος*. (Whitby.) (Notes, &c. Matt. xxvi. 51—57. Mark xiv. 46—53.) The inquiry of our Lord, whether it did not behoove him to drink the cup which his Father had given him, was peculiarly beautiful and expressive.

17 Then saith ^e the damsel that kept the door, unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, ^a I am not.

18 And the servants and officers stood there, ^e who had made a fire of coals, (^v for it was cold,) and they warmed themselves: and ^b Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

19 ¶ The high priest then ^b asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.

20 Jesus answered him, ⁱ I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort: ^k and in secret have I said nothing.

21 Why askest thou me? ^j ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

22 And, when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by, ^m struck Jesus with [†] the palm of his hand, saying, ⁿ Answerest thou the high priest so?

23 Jesus answered him, ^o If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?

e. 16. Matt. xxvi.
60. 70. Mark xiv.
66—68. Luke
xxii. 56, 57.
d. 9. 8. xxi. 17.
Matt. xxvi. 34.

e. 25. Mark xiv.
65. Luke xxii.
55, 56.
f. Luke xxii. 44.
g. Gen. xlix. 6.
h. 1 Kings xiv. 9.
i. Ps. i. i. xxvi.
4—10. Prov. xii.
20. Acts iv. 23.
j. 1 Cor. xiv. 35.
2 Cor. vi. 15—
17. Eph. v. 11, 12.
k. Luke xi. 53, 54.
xx. 20.
l. xii. 14. 26. xiii.
2. x. 23—30. Ps.
xiii. 22. xl. 7.
10. Matt. iv. 23.
ix. 35. xxi. 23.
m. 8c. Luke iv. 15.
16. xiv. 45—47.
xx. 1, 8c. xxi.
37.
n. k. vii. 4. Is. xlv.
19. xlviii. 16.
Matt. xxiv. 56.
Acts xxvi. 26.
1. Matt. xiv. 59.
60. Mark xiv. 55.
—59. Luke xxi.
27, 66. Acts
xxiv. 12, 13. 18.
—20.
o. m. Job. xvi. 10.
n. Acts xii. 12. Is.
1. 5—7. Jer. xx.
2. Mic. v. 1.
p. 1. Matt. xiv. 59.
68. Mark xiv. 65.
Luke xxii. 63.
64. Acts xxiii.
1. [†] *or a rod*
n. Acts xxiii. 4, 5.
o. 2 Cor. x. 1. 1.
†. Pet. ii. 20—23.

He did not confine his thoughts to the malice and injustice of his enemies in his sufferings; but he received them as a cup put into his hand by his heavenly Father, who would not afflict him without good reason, and for the most gracious and important purposes. Caiaphas seems to have obtained the high priesthood by the interest of Annas, who possessed it before him; the officers of the council led Jesus first to Annas, out of deference to his character; but he remitted them to Caiaphas, to whom Jesus was evidently brought, before the events which are next recorded. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 15, 16. Expositors have generally supposed, that this other disciple was John the evangelist: yet, as John was a fisherman of Galilee, it is not probable that he should be acquainted with the high-priest, and have any influence with his servants. It is more probable, that some person residing at Jerusalem, and of rank superior to the apostles, was intended; and that he on this occasion avowed himself the disciple of Jesus; and, having entered with him into the palace of the high-priest, procured admission for Peter, who had before been excluded.

V. 17, 18. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 19—23. (Notes, &c. Matt. xxvi. 58—68. Mark xiv. 53—65. Luke xxii. 54. 63—71.) It is probable that Caiaphas questioned Jesus concerning the number and rank of his disciples; but to this he answered nothing. He also inquired of him, what doctrine he had taught the people; with reference either to his assuming the character

p 13 Matt xxvi 57
 q 12
 r 13 Matt xiv 37
 s 17 Luke
 t 56
 u Matt xxvi 71
 v 72 Mark xiv 61
 w 70 Luke xx
 x 58
 y Gen xxiii 13
 z Exod 25
 Gal ii 11-13
 Heb xii 1, 2
 i 10
 j Prov xli 19
 k Matt xxvii 73
 l Mark xiv 70
 m Luke xx
 n 59, 60
 o xlii 30 Matt
 p xvi 34, 75
 q Mark xiv 50
 r 60
 s Luke xli 60-62
 t Matt xxvii 1
 u 2 Mark xv 1
 v Luke xlii 1
 w 33 xix 9 Matt
 x xxvii 27 Gr
 y Mark xvi 16 Gr
 z Or Pilate's
 house
 a Jer i 18 v 1
 b Mic ii 1
 c Luke xxii 66
 d Ps xxxviii 16
 e 10-15
 f Jer vii 3-11
 g Am v 24-28
 h Is ii 10-12
 i Matt xxiii 21-28
 j xxvii 8-14 17, 18 Ex xlv 21

21 (Now ^a Annas had sent him ^b bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.)

25 And Simon Peter ^c stood and warmed himself: ^d they said, therefore, unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? ^e He denied it, and said, I am not.

26 One of the servants of the high priest, (^a being ^b his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off,) saith, ^c Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

27 Peter then denied again; ^d and immediately the cock crew.

28 ¶ Then ^a led they Jesus from Caiaphas ^b unto the ^c hall of judgment: and it was ^d early; and they themselves went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might ^e eat the passover.

29 Pilate then went out unto them, Matt xxvii 21-28 xxxviii 14 17, 18 Ex xlv 21

and said, ^a What accusation bringest thou against this man?

30 They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have ^b delivered him up unto thee.

31 Then said Pilate unto them, ^a Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews, therefore, said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:

32 That ^a the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, saying I what death he should die.

33 Then Pilate entered into the judgment-hall again, and called Jesus, ^a and said unto him, Art thou ^b the King of the Jews?

34 Jesus answered him, ^a Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

35 Pilate answered, ^a Am I a Jew?

e Matt xxvii 21-28
 f Acts xxvii 26-28
 g 1 Kin 12 Mark
 h xv 2 Luke xix
 i 26 xxii 2
 j Mark x 23
 k Luke xlii 7
 l Acts ii 13
 m Acts xiv 16
 n Acts xiv 15 Gen
 o xxii 10 Ex xxii
 p 26-27 Hos iii
 q 3, 5
 r 10 13 x 31 29
 s xii 33 Matt
 t xii 19 xxvi 2
 u Luke xxvii 7, 3
 v Acts vii 59
 w Deut xxi 23
 x Ps xxii 16
 y Gal ii 13
 z Matt xxvii 11 Mark xv 2
 a Lu 6 xxvii 3, 14
 b 1 32 xxvii 13
 c xix 9 17-22
 d Ps ii 6-12 Is
 e ix 7 Jer xxiii
 f 5, 6 Zech vi 15
 g Zech ix 9 Luke
 h xiii 35-40
 i Acts ii 34-35
 j Ex 12 Neh
 k 12 Acts xviii
 l 14-16 xxvii 29
 m xxvii 19 20
 n Rom ii 1, 2

of the Messiah, or to the contrariety of his doctrine to the traditions of the elders. To this Jesus replied; that he had taught the people in the most frequented places, and the most open manner, and had spoken nothing in private contrary to his public instructions: and it was not proper to require his testimony in his own cause, as they were not disposed to believe it; but that regard to due order, or to law and justice, required them to seek for witnesses among those who had heard him. It is most likely that some were present, who had frequently heard his instructions. This reply was peculiarly suitable to the situation in which Jesus was at this time placed; for he stood as a prisoner on his trial, before judges who were determined to put him to death, and only sought a pretence for their injustice and murder. An officer, however, of the court, pretending that he answered the high-priest in a disrespectful manner, contumeliously smote him, either with a staff or with the palm of his hand. But Jesus meekly replied, by observing, that if on that, or on any other occasion, he had spoken any thing criminal, let him bear witness against him; but if his words were not faulty, why did he smite him, when he was on his trial in a court, where justice ought to be administered to every one? It was proper, that this man should be rebuked for his ill-behaviour; and that the imputation of blame should be done away from our Lord's character: though he was ready to endure every indignity and cruelty, without resistance or menace.

V. 25-27. (Notes, &c. Matt. xxvi. 69-75. Mark xiv. 66-72. Luke xxii. 54-62.)

V. 28-32. (Notes, &c. Matt. xxvii. 1, 2. 11-13. Mark xv. 1-5. Luke xxiii. 1-7.) "The hall of judgment" was a part of the Roman governor's palace, in which causes were generally decided, and perhaps some appendages of idolatry were seen there. The Jewish rulers therefore feared, lest they should contract ritual defilement if they went into it; and thus be prevented

from eating of the sacrifices, offered on the first day of unleavened bread, which were supposed to be an essential part of the feast of the passover. (Marg. Ref.) Thus they were scrupulous and zealous in externals, and were purposing to join in sacred ordinances, when they were trampling under foot every obligation of piety, justice, and mercy! (Marg. Ref.) Pilate, however, condescended to humour them in their scruples; and therefore he went out to them, to demand what accusation they brought against Jesus. He must have known many things respecting the character and reported miracles of Christ, but he did not wish to interpose. The Jewish rulers, therefore, considered his question as an insinuation against their equity; and they replied with a measure of displeasure, that they would not have condemned him, and delivered him to be put to death, if he had not been a malefactor deserving of so heavy a punishment. Thus they in fact required Pilate to believe Jesus guilty on their bare word, and without hesitation to give orders for his execution! But he, not approving of such a summary method of procedure, not willing to interfere without necessity, and yet averse to giving them offence, desired them to settle the matter by their own authority, and to judge and punish Jesus by their own law. It is not agreed, how far the authority of the Jewish courts at this time extended; but it seems evident, that they were not allowed, except under some restrictions, to inflict capital punishment, without sanction from the Roman governor; and no other sentence could gratify their virulent malice against Jesus. Nor did they choose to interpret Pilate's permission as a warrant to put him to death, lest he should afterwards take some advantage of it against them. Thus the words of Jesus, concerning his being lifted up from the earth, and being crucified, were fulfilled: for if the Jews had put him to death, they would have stoned him as a blasphemer. (Marg. Ref.)

a 28. xix. 11.

"Thine own nation, and the chief priests, have delivered thee unto me. 'What hast thou done?"

u xix. 6. Acts xxi. 39. xxii. 22-24.

36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, *then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

s vi. 15. xiii. 15. Ps. xiv. 3-7. Dan. ix. 6, 7. Dan. ix. 24. xiv. 13. Zech. ix. 9. Luke xii. 14. xvi. 20, 31. Rom. xiv. 17. Col. i. 12-14.

37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a King then? Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, *that I should bear witness

u Matt. xxvii. 64. xxviii. 7. Mark xiv. 62. xv. 2. Luke xxiii. 3. John vi. 13. xiii. 18. xiv. 6. Is. lv. 4. Rev. i. 5. iii. 14.

unto the truth. "Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice.

v vii. 17. viii. 47. x. 26, 27. 1 Pet. i. 22, 23. 1 John iii. 14. 19. iv. 6. v. 20.

38 Pilate saith unto him, "What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, "I find in him no fault at all:

z Acts xxvii. 19, 20. xxviii. 25, 26.

39 But ^b ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye, therefore, that ^c I release unto you the King of the Jews?

a xix. 4. 6. 21, 22. Matt. xxviii. 16. c. 24. Mark xv. 13. Luke xxiii. 4. 11-15. 1 Pet. i. 19. ii. 22, 23. b Matt. xxviii. 15. c. 18. Mark xv. 6. 9-11. Luke xxiii. 17. 20. c. 39.

40 Then ^d cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

d Mat. xxviii. 16. 28. Mark xv. 7. 15. Luke xxiii. 18, 19. 25. Acts iii. 1-14.

V 33—36. After the rulers had acknowledged that they had no authority to put any man to death, Pilate returned into the judgment-hall to examine Jesus; and especially to inquire, if indeed he avowed himself the King of the Jews; for this would be adjudged an act of treason against the Roman emperor. And when Jesus asked, whether he made this inquiry from his own opinion of his conduct, or merely because others had informed him that he laid claim to this character, he replied, that he was no Jew, and knew nothing of their sentiments concerning the expected Messiah. The priests and rulers of his own nation were his prosecutors, and therefore Pilate desired to know by what crimes he had excited their suspicion or indignation? Jesus then intimated, that he *was* a King; but that "his kingdom was not of this world:" it had nothing to do with men's temporal interests or privileges; it left rulers and subjects in the same situation as it found them; and it was therefore no object of jealousy to any government. Had he claimed a kingdom of an earthly nature, he would of course have armed his followers, and they would have fought in his cause; but as his disciples had been few in number, inoffensive in their conduct, and forbidden to fight for him even when he was apprehended, it was evident that his kingdom was not of a secular nature, but related wholly to spiritual and heavenly things, and would be supported entirely by spiritual sanctions and authority. The multitudes that followed Christ when he entered Jerusalem would have readily fought for him, if he had claimed a temporal kingdom; and they seem to have been set against him because he would not.

V. 37—40. Pilate next demanded, whether Jesus professed to be a King in any sense? To which he answered, by assenting to Pilate's proposition, that he was a King: and he averred, that he was born for that end; that he came into the world to bear witness to the truth of God in this and every other particular; and that every one that belonged to the truth, and was disposed to comply with it, heard and obeyed his voice; though his nation in general rejected and opposed him. This reply caused Pilate to exclaim, "What is truth?" But whether he did it out of curiosity, or in derision, or from some impression of reverence to Christ's character and behaviour, is not certain. As, however, our Lord did not immediately answer, he went out, declaring to the Jews his full conviction that

Jesus was entirely innocent, as to the crimes of which he had been accused. Yet, since they had delivered him up as a malefactor, he proposed, by a customary act of grace at that festival, to release to them their inoffensive King; by which means the people would be satisfied, and the rulers would be exempted from censure for the part which they had taken in his prosecution. But they all, both priests and rulers, and the people that had assembled on this occasion, clamorously preferred the robber Barabbas to him!

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—9.

Even the rancorous malice of our Lord's enemies did not render them more eager to apprehend and crucify him, than his love to perishing sinners made him ready to meet all those sufferings which he knew were coming on him, that he might effect their salvation! All the power of earth and hell could not for a moment have resisted his omnipotence, if he had seen good to exert it: but he only alarmed, and did not injure, his assailants; for that was the day of his patience and meekness, as our Surety and Example. Yet the day of his wrath will come, when all who oppose, yea, all who do not obey his Gospel, shall be driven backward and perish for ever. (*Note, 2 Thes. i. 7—9.*) In the mean time he spares and warns his adversaries: yet neither his terror, nor his forbearance, will deter men in general from their purpose, or from pursuing worldly things, in contempt of his salvation, and in defiance of his vengeance! But he most tenderly regards the temporal peace and safety, as well as the eternal interests, of his faithful disciples: he proportions their trials to their strength: nor will he ever require them to bear such sufferings for him as he bore for them.

V. 10—32.

From the example of our Saviour, we should learn to receive our lighter afflictions as "a cup which our Father has given us to drink;" and to resist every temptation to escape suffering by sin, or to murmur and despond under it; by asking ourselves, whether we ought thus to oppose our Father's will, or to distrust his love? Self-

CHAP. XIX.

Jesus is scourged, crowned with thorns, and mocked by the soldiers, 1—3. Pilate, declaring his innocence, the Jews charge him with calling himself the Son of God, 4—7. Pilate, after further examination, desires to release him; but, overcome with the clamours of the Jews, delivers him to be crucified, 8—16. He is led to Golgotha, and crucified between two thieves, 17, 18. The title placed over his cross, which Pilate refuses to alter, 19—22. The soldiers part his garments, 23, 24. Jesus commends his mother to John, 25—27, and, receiving vinegar to drink, he expires, 28—30. The legs of the others are broken; and the side of Jesus is pierced by a soldier, and thus the scriptures are fulfilled, 31

—37. Joseph of Arimathea, assisted by Nicodemus, buries him, 38—42.

THEN ^a Pilate, therefore, took Jesus, and ^b scourged him,
2 And ^c the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,

3 And said, ^d Hail, ^e King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

4 Pilate, therefore, went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, ^f that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, ^g Behold the man!

6 When ^h the chief priests, therefore,

^a Matt. xxvii. 26. ^b Mark xv. 15. ^c Luke xxiii. 10, 23. ^d Ps. cxlxi. 3. ^e Ps. lxxv. 3. ^f Matt. xx. 12. ^g Mark x. 33. ^h Luke xxiii. 32. ⁱ Acts xvi. 22, 23. ^j 2 Cor. xi. 24, 25. ^k Heb. xi. 36. ^l 1 Pet. ii. 24. ^m C. 5. ⁿ 10. ^o xxii. 6. ^p 10. ^q xlii. 7. ^r lxx. 3. ^s Matt. xxvii. 27—31. ^t Mark xv. 17—20. ^u Luke xxiii. 11. ^v Matt. xxvi. 49. ^w xxvii. 29. ^x Luke i. 28. ^y 12. ^z xxviii. 32. ^{aa} C. 6. ^{ab} xviii. 38. ^{ac} Matt. xxvii. 4. ^{ad} 19. ^{ae} 21. ^{af} 34. ^{ag} Luke xxiii. 41. ^{ah} 47. ^{ai} 2 Cor. v. 21. ^{aj} Heb. iii. 26. ^{ak} 1 Pet. i. 19. ^{al} 11. ^{am} 22. ^{an} iii. 18. ^{ao} 1. ^{ap} John iii. 5. ^{aq} 1. ^{ar} 29. ^{as} 18. ^{at} vii. 14. ^{au} 21. ^{av} 3. ^{aw} xiii. 1. ^{ax} 1. ^{ay} Lam. i. 12. ^{az} Heb. xii. 2. ^{ba} 15. ^{bb} Matt. xxvii. 22, 23. ^{bc} Mark xv. 12—15. ^{bd} Luke xxiii. 21—23. ^{be} cts. ii. 23. ^{bf} iii. 13—15. ^{bg} vii. 52. ^{bh} xlii. 27—29.

confident rashness is very different from the steady courage and patience of faith: they who most readily venture into temptation, are often most easily overcome by it. The company of profane and wicked men, either corrupts or disarms those pious persons that are seduced into it; and they soon forget their purposes and resolution, and conform to the humour, or try to shun the reproach, of their companions. We should therefore watch and pray against such temptations: yet humiliating experience of our own weakness is commonly necessary to teach us caution, and attention to the words of Christ. As he suffered every insult, for the sake of Peter, even when Peter was basely denying him; so he foresaw all our unfaithfulness and ingratitude at the time when he shed his blood for our sins! This consideration should not only encourage our hope in his boundless mercy, but also shame us out of our base requitals of so gracious a Benefactor. The most perfect meekness, patience, and wisdom of the Son of God, only served to increase the outrageous enmity of his persecutors; and with their base usage reciprocally illustrated his consummate excellency. This should teach us what to expect from the wicked, and how to behave towards them. So blind are men in the things of religion, that they often expect to please God by exactness in externals, whilst they are deliberately perpetrating the basest iniquities! Nay, they hope to atone for their murders and oppressions by hypocritical forms of godliness! They who are most scandalously unjust, frequently expect most credit for their strict regard to justice, and they are greatly affronted to be suspected of the least crime, whilst they are actually committing the greatest! But the malice even of the worst of men tends to fulfil the words of Jesus, and to accomplish the wise and holy purposes of God.

V. 33—40.



We should always remember, that the kingdom of

Christ is not of this world; it should not be promoted by carnal weapons or means of any kind, or by any party, nor accommodated to their temporal interests. He reigns in the heart and conscience of his true subjects; the princes of this world have nothing to fear from the obedience of Christians to his authority, nor does he need the countenance of theirs, though he may see good sometimes to make use of it. His servants are commanded to “render tribute to whom tribute is due, and honour to whom honour,” to “submit to the powers that be,” to “fear God and the king, and not to meddle with those who are given to change;” though, at the same time, they must obey God rather than man, when man presumes to interfere out of his own province. It would be much for the credit of the Gospel, if all the professed subjects of Christ, whilst they stand up for the right of liberty of conscience, would be careful to render a conscientious obedience to these plain precepts in this matter. Then they would more resemble him, “who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession,” and prove themselves to be of the truth, by hearing and obeying his voice. But many profess to inquire after truth, who are not disposed to wait for or welcome an answer. Numbers give Jesus and his people a good word, who will not join them, or venture any thing in his cause; numbers commit injustice for fear of their own dependents, and from a desire of popularity, and the majority of all ranks still in fact prefer Barabbas to Christ; so that it requires more constancy, than unregenerate men in general possess, to stem the torrent of impetuous wickedness. Let us, however, look to the Lamb of God, in whom the governor could find no fault at all; let us endeavour in the same manner to make all our accusers ashamed; let us never indulge prejudices against persons or doctrines, because multitudes decry them; and let us beware of deliberately sparing our lusts, (those robbers of God, and murderers of the soul,) and thus “crucifying Christ afresh, and putting him to open shame.”

and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, ¹ Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.

⁷ The Jews answered him, ^k We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, ^l because he made himself the Son of God.

⁸ When Pilate, therefore, ^m heard, that saying, he was the more afraid;

⁹ And went again into the judgment-hall, and saith unto Jesus, ⁿ Whence art thou? ^o But Jesus gave him no answer.

¹⁰ Then saith Pilate unto him, Speak-

est thou not unto me? ^p knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

¹¹ Jesus answered, ^q Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore ^r he that delivered me unto thee hath ^s the greater sin.

¹² And ^t from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, ^u thou art not Cesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cesar.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX. V. 1—7. (Notes, Matt. xxvii. 27—31. Mark xv. 16—20.) John seems to have mentioned our Lord's being scourged and crowned with thorns in the exact order of time in which these events occurred. Perhaps Pilate hoped that by severely scourging Jesus, and allowing the soldiers to treat him with cruel mockery, the rulers of the Jews might be induced to consent to his release, or that the compassion of the multitude would have been excited, and so they might have been influenced to prefer him to Barabbas. He therefore brought him forth to them arrayed in a purple robe, and crowned with thorns, and probably covered with his own blood; and having repeated his full conviction of his entire innocence, he called upon them to "behold the Man," and to consider whether he was not rather an object of compassion or contempt, than of jealousy and hatred. But the rulers were too rancorous in malice to be moved by the spectacle; and fearing lest it should affect the common people differently, they became still more clamorous in demanding his immediate crucifixion. This seems to have greatly displeased Pilate; and therefore he bade them take Jesus, and crucify him themselves, seeing he found no fault in his whole conduct. His reply induced them to add the charge of *blasphemy* to that of *rebellion against the Roman authority*; that if Pilate would not condemn him as a traitor, he might consent to his death, as justly condemned for blasphemy by their law. (Marg. Ref.) This was indeed the supposed crime for which he suffered, though they could not but know, that the Messiah was expressly predicted under the title of the Son of God. (Ps. ii. 7. 12.)

V. 8—12. It is not necessary to ascertain what thoughts were excited in Pilate's mind on this occasion; he seems, however, to have been impressed with an apprehension that Jesus might probably be some extraordinary person, very high in favour with the superior powers; and that it would be dangerous to proceed further against him; and the mild dignity and gravity of his behaviour, amidst all the insults and cruelties which he experienced, might tend to confirm this opinion. He therefore demanded of Jesus, "Whence he was?" whether of earthly or heavenly origin? But our Lord gave him no answer. He was no competent judge in a question of this kind; and his unjust conduct, in allowing such cruelties to be exercised on a person whom he knew to be innocent, rendered him un-

worthy of further regard. But the silence of our Lord seems to have astonished and displeased Pilate, who haughtily inquired if he refused to speak to him, when he knew that he had an unrestrained authority, either to order him to immediate crucifixion, or to set him at liberty? Jesus therefore showed him, that he had his power from above, even from the God of heaven, and would be called to an account for his use of it; nor indeed could he at all have employed it against him, if the Lord had not, for wise reasons, seen good to permit it. This would have been the case, if an ordinary person had been concerned; but there was a peculiar propriety in the remark, when made with reference to the Lord of life and glory, now delivered up into the hands of an idolater, who was about to abuse his authority by condemning him to be crucified. As our Lord suffered for the sins of both Jews and Gentiles, it was a special part of the counsel of infinite wisdom, that the Jews should first purpose his death, and that the Gentiles should carry that purpose into execution. But though Pilate was about to contract very great guilt by condemning him, yet Caiaphas, who, at the head of the Jewish council, had delivered up the promised Messiah into the hands of idolaters, would have far more to answer for, as his situation enabled him to know more of the true God and his law, as well as to have more acquaintance with the doctrine and miracles of Jesus; and as the conduct of the high-priest, and all concerned with him in that prosecution, resulted from far more determinate enmity to the truth, holiness, and authority of God, than Pilate's did. This answer was in fact a solemn warning to Pilate to beware what he did in such a case; and he seems to have understood it in some degree, so that he became the more desirous to release him. But the rulers, finding that their last accusation rather obstructed than forwarded the completion of their design, endeavoured next to terrify Pilate into compliance, by declaring that he could not pretend to be cordially in the interests of the Roman emperor, if he neglected to punish a man, who, by aspiring to the kingdom, must be deemed Cesar's competitor and enemy. The jealous tyranny and cruelty of Tiberius Cesar, who was then emperor, are well known; and Pilate, probably fearing lest some spies should carry an accusation against him to Rome, immediately yielded to their injustice.—Pilate's conscience fighteth for Christ; but straightway it yieldeth, because it is not upholden by the singular

xviii. 31. Matt
xxvii. 24, 25.

Lev. xxix. 16.
Deut. xviii. 20.
17 Ex. viii. 55.
18 Ex. x. 30—33.
19 Ex. 38 Matt
xxvi. 63—66
xxviii. 42, 43
Mark xiv. 61
64. xv. 39 Rom
6. 1.

15 Acts xiv. 11
—19.
n viii. 14 ix. 29,
30 Jud. xii. 19
o Ps. xxxviii. 13
—15 Is liii. 7
p Matt. xxviii. 12
—11 Mark xv. 3
—5 Acts vii.
32, 33.

xxviii. 29 Dan
iii. 12 v. 19.
xiii. 27 Gen. xiv.
7, 8 Ex. ix. 14
—16 1 Chr.
xxiii. 11, 12 Ps.
lxxii. 11 Jer.
xxviii. 5—7.
Isam. hi. 37.
Dan. iv. 17, 25.
32, 25 v. 21
Matt. vi. 13.
Luke xxii. 58.
Acts ii. 23 iv.
20, Rom. ix. 30.
xviii. 31 Jam. 1:7.
x. 49, 50 Matt
xxvi. 65. xxviii.
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ix. 41. xv. 22—
24 Luke vii. 41.
42. s. 11—14.
xviii. 31 Jam.
iv. 17.
Mark vi. 16—26.
Acts xxiv. 24—
27.
xviii. 33—37.
Luke xxviii. 2—5 Acts vii. 6, 7.

13 When Pilate, therefore, * heard that
saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat
down in the judgment-seat, in a place
that is called the Pavement, but in the
Hebrew, Gabbatha.

14 And it was * the preparation of the
passover, and about * the sixth hour:
and he saith unto the Jews, * Behold
your King!

15 But they cried out, * Away with
him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate
saith unto them, Shall I crucify your
King? The chief priests answered, * We
have no King but Cesar.

16 Then * delivered he him, therefore,
unto them to be crucified. And they
took Jesus and led him away.

17 And he, * bearing his cross, * went
forth into a place called the place of a
skull, which is called in the Hebrew,
Golgotha;

18 Where * they crucified him, and
two others with him, on either side one,
and Jesus in the midst.

19 * And Pilate * wrote a title, and
put it on the cross. And the writing
was, * JESUS OF NAZARETH THE
KING OF THE JEWS.

20 This title then read many of the
Jews; for the place where Jesus was
crucified was nigh to the city: and it
was written * in Hebrew, * and Greek,
and Latin.

21 Then said the chief priests of the
Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King
of the Jews; but that he said, I am King
of the Jews.

22 Pilate answered, * What I have
written, I have written.

* power of God.' (Beza.) 'As Tacitus and Suetonius
observe, Tiberius was apt to suspect the worst: and the
least crimes with him made a man guilty of death, if
they related to the government. Pilate durst not there-
fore venture that this charge should be laid against him.'

(Whitby.)
V. 13—18. (Notes, Matt. xxvii. 19—26. Mark xv.
12—16. Luke xxiii. 20—34.) Pilate having ascended
his tribunal, which was not in the judgment-hall, but in a
more public place (called the pavement, as it is supposed,
from a curious and beautiful piece of Mosaic work
which adorned it; or Gabbatha, that is, the high-place,
from its elevation above the adjacent parts,) proceeded to
pass sentence on Jesus. The Evangelist observes, that it
was the preparation of the Passover, or the day before the
solemn sabbath, which occurred on the second day of un-
leavened bread, (Note, 31—37.) for which the people
ought to have been making preparation; though many of
them were far otherwise employed. It was also "about
the sixth hour." As there is no reason to think that St.
John computed time in a different manner from the other
Evangelists; as six o'clock, (according to the Roman
computation,) or soon after sun-rise, must have been much
too early for all the events to have occurred that morning
which preceded our Lord's crucifixion; as St. Mark has
expressly mentioned the third hour, or nine o'clock, for
the time of that event, to which the accounts of the other
Evangelists accord; and as the sixth hour, or noon, (ac-
cording to the Jewish computation,) would be too late to
agree with the parallel Scriptures: so it seems the most
easy way of solving the difficulty, to suppose that sixth
instead of third was inserted by some of the early trans-
cribers of this gospel. The mistake would be very trivial,
and very easily fallen into; and in a few places it is neces-
sary to allow that this has happened. Indeed some manu-
scripts read the third hour. But however this may be
determined, Pilate again pointed out the suffering Jesus to
the implacable Jews, saying, "Behold your King!" per-

haps in scorn of them; as if a king crowned with thorns,
and covered with stripes, befitted such a people. When
they still persisted in demanding his crucifixion, he asked
them, whether he should crucify their King? And though,
on other occasions, they had many doubts and objections
even concerning the lawfulness of submitting, or paying
tribute, to the Roman emperor; yet to gratify their
malice, they at once exclaimed, that they had no other
king but Cesar. Upon which Pilate, perhaps deeming
this concession from so turbulent a people of considerable
importance, got over all his scruples, and delivered up
Jesus to be crucified. 'Josephus expressly assures us,
that Pilate was deposed from his government by Vitel-
lius, and sent to Tiberius at Rome, who died before he
arrived there. And Eusebius tells us, that quickly after,
(having, as others say, been banished to Vienne in
Gaul,) he laid violent hands on himself, falling on his
own sword. Agrippa, who was an eye-witness to many
of his enormities, speaks of him in his oration to Caius
Cesar, as one who had been a man of a most infamous
character. Probably, the accusations of other Jews, fol-
lowing him, had before this proved his destruction.'

(Doddridge.)
V. 19—22. (Marg. Ref.) The three languages, in
which this inscription was written, were more generally
understood in that age than any other; and most persons
present would be capable of reading it in some one of
them: so that this was in fact to publish the kingdom of
Christ to the nations of the earth. We need not there-
fore wonder that it gave umbrage to the Jewish rulers; as
it seemed to imply, that they had enviously and maliciously
persecuted to death their promised Messiah: and probably
Pilate intended it as a reflection upon them. He was,
however, so put out of humour, by being compelled to
condemn an innocent man, contrary to his judgment and
conscience, that he would not gratify them, in allowing
the inscription to be altered; which was doubtless owing
to the secret power of God upon his heart, in order that

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22 Luke xxiii
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p. Mat. xxvii. 35.
Mark xv. 24.
Luke xxiii. 34

23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part, and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, * woven from the top throughout.

* Or wrought.
Ex. xxxix. 22,
33.

24 They said, therefore, among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

q. 29. 36, 37. v. 35
xii. 38, 39.

r. Ps. xxii. 18. Is.
x. 7. Acts xiii.
27.

25 ¶ Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, * his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

s. Luke ii. 35.
t. Matt. xxvi. 55.
u. 26. Mark xv. 40.
v. 41. Luke xxiii.
49.

† Or, Cleopas.

u. Luke xxiii. 49.
v. 1. 11-18.
Mark xvi. 9.
Luke viii. 2.
xxiii. 42. cxi. 7.
20. 24.

v. 1. 11-18.
Mark xvi. 9.
Luke viii. 2.
xxiii. 42. cxi. 7.
20. 24.

w. 1. John iii. 18.
b. xvi. 32. Marg.

26 When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

b. xvi. 32. Marg.

this attestation of our Lord's character might continue.—Perhaps the open insults that the chief priests and rulers used, as Jesus hung upon the cross, might in part be intended to counteract the effects of this inscription on the minds of the people.

V. 23, 24. (Note, Ps. xxii. 18. Matt. xxvii. 35, 36. Marg. Ref.) It is not, I believe, clearly known, in what way an upper garment was so formed in the loom, as to need no seam in any part of it. Very probably, this vesture was the work of some of those women, who ministered to our Lord; and it seems to have been considered as both curious and valuable.

V. 25—27. The inward anguish, and the conflicting thoughts and affections, with which the mind of Mary must have been agitated on this most distressing occasion, can never be described or imagined: but, considering all the expectations excited by the conception, birth, and infancy of Jesus, and all the miracles, and other extraordinary circumstances of his public ministry, she could scarcely doubt, even when she saw him expire on the cross, but that he was the promised Messiah, the King of Israel. (Marg. Ref.) After Joseph's death, and our Lord's entrance on his ministry, it is probable that Mary had generally attended him: and being now present to behold his crucifixion, Jesus, amidst all his own sufferings, was tenderly mindful of her; and by turning her attention to John, the beloved disciple, as one who would be as a son to her, and by mentioning her to him as his mother, to whom he was to perform the duty of that relation for his sake, he influenced John to take her to his own home, to provide for her, and to treat

28 ¶ After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.

30 When Jesus, therefore, had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

31 The Jews, therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath-day, (for that sabbath-day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs.

34 But one of the soldiers with a spear

her with all respect and affection as long as she lived. How long that was, or where John had a home, we are not informed.

V. 28—30. The whole of Christ's expiatory sufferings was now on the very point of being finished; but in order to the fulfilment of some other Scriptures, he said, "I thirst:" (Marg. Ref.) and his exquisite torture, fatigue, and heat, doubtless caused his thirst to be very intense. Probably this was soon after he had cried out, "Eli, Eli, &c." (for this evangelist generally records other circumstances, even of the same events, than the others do,) and so it was this word, "I thirst," that induced some present to offer him vinegar; whilst others waited to see whether Elias would come to save him. When Jesus, by receiving and tasting the vinegar, had accomplished these predictions also, he said, "It is finished," or, *It is perfected*: all that the prophets had foretold; all that the types prefigured; all that the justice of God required, as an atonement for sin, in order to the reconciliation of sinners to himself; all that the honour of his law and government demanded; and whatever was necessary for the glory of all the divine perfections in man's salvation; was now completely finished: and so was the victory over Satan, sin, the world, and death, as far as our Lord's obedience and sufferings were concerned.—Probably the inward darkness and anguish, that began to oppress our Lord's mind in the garden, at this moment were finally dispersed; and thus he expired in the clear perception and full enjoyment of the light of his Father's countenance.

CHAP. XX.

Mary Magdalene, discovering that the stone was taken from the sepulchre, runs to tell Peter and John; who hasten thither, and find not the body, but only the grave-clothes in exact order, 1—10. Mary, as she weeps, sees two angels, and afterwards Jesus, who sends her to inform the apostles, 11—18. Jesus meets them, as assembled in the evening, and speaks peace to them, 19—23. Thomas, who was absent, remains resolute-

ly incredulous, 24, 25. Jesus again meets the assembled disciples, and satisfies Thomas, who confesses him as his Lord and God, 26—29. These things were recorded, that we might believe, and have life through his name, 30, 31.

THE ^a first day of the week ^b cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth ^c the stone taken away from the sepulchre. 2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and ^d to the other disciple

a 10. 26. Act. xxv. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Rev. i. 10. b Matt. xxviii. 1. Mark xvi. 1. 2. 9. Luke xxiv. 1. 10. c Matt. xxviii. 1. 2. 9. Mark xvi. 40. xxi. 2. 4. d xlii. 23. xix. 26. xxi. 7. 20. 24.

in unconverted men is often strong; but where faith is wanting, the world will get the victory, and the dread of reproach or loss, or the hope of secular advantage, will induce them to venture the wrath of God, and all its tremendous consequences. Every one is inexcusable, who commits known injustice, or deliberately acts contrary to his conscience, on whatever account; but the greater opportunities men possess of knowing the truth and will of God, the more aggravated will their guilt be found in rebelling against them; yet such persons have often been most desperately engaged in opposing the power of godliness, and persecuting those whose doctrine and example have tended to detect their hypocrisy and usurpations!—All those rulers of every description, who have proudly set in judgment on Christ and his servants, and condemned them, will soon stand before his tribunal, where they will know the power of his wrath, and be constrained to confess, with terror and anguish, that “Truly this was the “Son of God.”

V. 17—30.

We cannot wholly pass over this narrative of our Redeemer's crucifixion, without again reflecting for a moment on the complicated cruelties and indignities to which he was exposed, without any fault of his own. But he was wounded and scourged, that we might be healed; he was arrayed with scorn in the purple robe, that he might procure for us sinners the robe of righteousness and salvation; he was crowned with thorns, that we might be crowned with honour and immortality; he stood speechless, that we might have an all prevailing plea; he endured torture, that we might have a strong consolation; he thirsted, that we might drink of the waters of life; he bare the wrath of the Father, that we might enjoy his favour; he was numbered with transgressors, that we might be made equal to the angels; he died, that we might live for ever! Let us then often retire to survey this scene, and to admire his immeasurable love, that we may learn to mourn for sin, and hate it, and rejoice in our obligations to the Redeemer; and that we may be “constrained by love to live “no longer to ourselves, but to him who died for us, and “rose again.” As we ought to hear, with thankful exultation, that the ransom and righteousness of our souls were perfected, when Jesus said “It is finished,” so we should be excited to redouble our diligence, that the work of sanctifying grace may be powerfully carried on towards per-

fection in our hearts. For we should look to him as our King, as well as our High-priest. In every way it hath been decidedly written, and the writing shall never be reversed, “that Jesus of Nazareth is the King of the church, ‘and of the world;’ and all, who profess his religion, and will not have him to reign over them, will be deemed guilty of crucifying their king with indignation and contempt. We may be encouraged by our Lord's attention to his mother, when he hung upon the cross, to hope for his condescending pity in all our sorrows and afflictions, now that he is exalted to the throne; (Notes, &c. Matt. xii. 46—50.) but we may also learn, that the surest interest in his love will not secure our exemption from the sharpest temporal sufferings. His example likewise teaches all men to honour their parents, in every circumstance of life and death; to provide for their wants, and to promote their comfort by every means in their power: and we ought also to show our love to Jesus, by behaving with respect and liberal kindness to those whom he loves; even as though they were our most endeared relatives.

V. 31—42.

The tender mercies of the wicked, and especially of persecutors, are cruel; and the preparation of hypocrites for religious ordinances, by the commission of the most horrible crimes, is the worst of abominations. But believers, if called to witness such scenes, should peculiarly observe how God over-rules every thing to fulfil his own word. Thus comparing the sacred oracles with the events that occur in the Church and in the world, our faith will be increased, even by the most discouraging transactions. May we then continually look to him, whom by our sins we too have ignorantly and heedlessly pierced; and who shed from his wounded side both water and blood, that we “might be washed, and sanctified, and justified, in his “name, and by the Spirit of our God.” Thus our hearts will be habitually affected with penitent sorrow, believing hope, and lively gratitude, and prepared for every service to which we are called. In this way, feeble, unestablished, and timorous believers will grow in grace, in knowledge, in stability, and boldness; and so be prepared to avow their relation to Jesus in the time of extreme danger and difficulty, though they perhaps have formerly hesitated to confess him before men, when it might have been done with comparative safety.

whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

3 Peter, "therefore, went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

4 So they ran both together, and the other disciple did "out-run Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

5 And he, stooping down, and looking in, "saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

6 Then "cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

7 And the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

9 For as yet "they knew not the scripture, "that he must rise again from the dead.

10 Then the disciples "went away again unto their own home.

11 ¶ But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping: and, as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,

12 And "seeth two angels "in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

13 And they say unto her, "Woman, "why weepest thou? She saith unto them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, "and saw Jesus standing, "and knew not that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? "whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardner, saith unto him, Sir, "if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

16 Jesus saith unto her, "Mary. "She turned herself, and saith unto him, "Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

17 Jesus saith unto her, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to "my brethren, and say unto them, "I ascend unto my Father, and "your Father; and to my God, and "your God.

18 ¶ Jesus saith unto her, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to "my brethren, and say unto them, "I ascend unto my Father, and "your Father; and to my God, and "your God.

NOTES.

CHAP. XX. V. 1—10. Mary seems to have arrived at the sepulchre before any of the other women, "when "it was yet dark;" and finding the stone removed, she hastened back to inform Peter and John, that some persons had "taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre;" and, as "they knew not where they had laid him," she and her friends were deprived of the opportunity of showing their respect and affection, by embalming his body. It is very improbable that she should speak thus, if she had seen an angel informing her that Jesus was risen; and therefore she doubtless was at the sepulchre apart from the other women. Peter and John, however, hearing her report, set out together to the sepulchre; but the latter, probably being the younger man, arrived there first, and looking in, he saw the linen clothes lie, yet he entered not in, perhaps being afraid. Soon after, Peter came up, and according to the promptitude of his disposition, he entered into the sepulchre without hesitation, and found the grave-clothes laid in such regular order, as evinced that neither friends nor foes had taken away the body in a hasty manner. Upon this John also entered in, and, from what he saw, he was convinced that Jesus was risen, though neither he nor Peter had understood from the Scripture that the Messiah would rise again from the dead. (*Marg. Ref.*) The apostles, however, having made their obser-

vations, returned to their company, to wait the event of these extraordinary occurrences; John, convinced that his beloved Lord was indeed risen, and Peter full of astonishment and uncertainty.

V. 11—17. Mary Magdalene, who had followed the apostles, oppressed with the most inconsolable sorrow, at length looked into the sepulchre, and there saw two angels, (probably in the form of young men clothed in white,) sitting at each end of it; and they immediately accosted her, inquiring the cause of her excessive sorrow? Yet she seems not to have greatly attended to them, perhaps in her confusion, supposing them to have been disciples who had come to view the sepulchre; and therefore she answered them in the words which she had used to the apostles.—But as she turned from them, Jesus himself was pleased to appear to her: yet, through excessive weeping, and not at all expecting to see him, she did not know him. And, supposing that it was the person employed by Joseph to take care of the garden, it occurred to her, that perhaps he had removed the body to some other place; and therefore she desired, that if he had, he would inform her, and she would take it away, and be at the expense and trouble of the burial. It is observable, that though speaking to a supposed stranger, she did not mention the name of Jesus, but said, *him*, as if every body must of course know whom she meant! Jesus then called to her by

o Matt xviii 9
—5. Mark xvi
o. 6. Luke xxi
3. 2. 22, 23.
3. Chr. iv. 12.
Dan. vii. 9.
Matt. xxi. 2.
Acts i. 10. Rev.
ii. 1. 14. 16.
qii. 4. xii. 26.
r. 15. xiv. 27. 28.
s. 1. 6. 7. 20. 22.
Sam. 8. Ps. xlii.
3. 5. 11. Eccl. i. 4.
Jer. xxxi. 16.
Luke xxi. 17.
Acts xxi. 13.
e. 2.
f. Cant. iii. 7. 4.
Mark xvi. 2.
u. viii. 59. xvi. 2.
Mark xvi. 12.
1. 16. 2. 17. 30.
xxiv. 16. 31.
x. 1. 38. xxi. 4. 7.
Cant. ii. 2. vi.
1. Matt. xxi. 1.
5. Mark xvi. 6.
Luke xxi. 6.
y. 1. Sam. i. 16.
Matt. xii. 34.
xx. 3. 4. Gen.
xxxi. 11. Ex. iii.
1. 12. 17. 1. 17.
Sam. ii. 10. 19.
xiii. 1. Luke x.
4. Acts ix. 4. x. 3.
e. Cant. ii. 8. 9.
v. 2. Matt. xvi.
27.
f. 28. 1. 38. 49. 113.
2. vi. 25. xi. 28.
xiii. 12. Matt.
xxiii. 8. 10.
c. 27. 2. Kings. iv.
29. vii. 9. Matt.
xxviii. 7. 9. 10.
Luke x.
d. Ps. xlvii. 22.
Matt. xii. 30.
xx. 40. xxxviii.
10. Rom. viii. 29.
Heb. ii. 11—13.
xxiii. 1. 3. xiv.
3. 6. 20. xvi. 28.
xxv. 5. 11. 27.
Ps. lxxv. 3. lxxxix. 26. Luke xxi. 43—51. Eph. i. 17—23. iv. 8—10. 1. Pet. i. 3.
f. 12. 13. Rom. viii. 14—17. 2. Cor. i. 26. 16. 7. 1. John ii. 2. xvi. 1. 7. 1. 1. 1.
g. Gen. xvi. 7. 8. P. xlii. 14. 15. xl. 10. Jer. xxxi. 33. xxxiii. 38. Ez. xxxvi.
28. xxxvii. 27. Zech. xiii. 7—9. Heb. viii. 10. xi. 16.

^b Mark xvi. 10—
13.
^c Mark xvi. 14
Luke xiv. 36.
^d 1 Cor. xv. 5.
^e 26. Neh. vi. 10.
11.
12. 19—23. xvi.
20. Matt. xxviii.
22.
23. 19—27. xvi.
83. Ps. lxxv. 3.
—10. Is. lviii. 18.
19. Matt. x. 13.
Luke xxiv. 36.
Rom. xv. 33.
Eph. ii. 14. vi.
20. Phil. i. 2.
2 Thes. iii. 16.
Heb. vi. 2. Rev.
1. 4.
^f Luke xxiv.
33, 40. 1 John i.
3.

18 Mary Magdalene ^b came, and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

19 ¶ Then ⁱ the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, ^k when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, ^l came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, ^m Peace be unto you.

20 And when he had so said, ⁿ he shewed unto them *his* hands, and his side.

Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.

21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: ^p as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

22 And when he had said this, ^q he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.

23 Whose ^r so ever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose so ever sins ye retain, they are retained.

^s Matt. xvi. 19. xviii. 18. Mark ii. 5—10. Acts ii. 38. x. 43. xiii. 38, 39. 1 Cor. ii. 6—10. Eph. ii. 20. 1 Tim. i. 20.

o xvi. 22. Is. xlv. 8. Luke xxiv. 41. Mark xvi. 17. 19. xvi. 15—17. Is. lxi. 1—3. Matt. x. 16. 40. Mark xvi. 15—18. Luke xxiv. 37—49. Acts i. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 2. Heb. iii. 1. Job q Gen. ii. 7. Job xxviii. 4. Ps. xxviii. 6. Eccl. xxviii. 9. r xiv. 16. 9. 26. xvi. 7. Acts ii. 4. 38. iv. 8. viii. 15. x. 47. xix. 2. Gal. iii. 2. 1 Cor. v. 4, 5. 2

name; and his voice and address made him known to her: turning herself therefore with joy and amazement, she called him “Rabboni,” which seems to signify “Master,” or “Teacher,” with particular respect and application: but when she was about to spend time in further expressing her affection, (*Matt. xxviii. 9, 10.*) or perhaps to satisfy herself that it was not merely an apparition; Jesus prevented her by saying “Touch me not, &c.” Thus intimating that she would have other opportunities: for, though he had repeatedly told his disciples that he was about to go to his Father; yet he was not yet ascended, or about to ascend immediately, but should continue with them a short time on earth, for their satisfaction and comfort. In the mean while she ought without delay to carry the joyful news of his resurrection to the disconsolate disciples, whom he acknowledged as his brethren, notwithstanding they had so lately forsaken him; and she was further to inform them that he was risen, in order “to ascend to his Father, and their Father, and to his God, and their God”: for as he, the eternal Son of God, had become their Brother by assuming human nature, so, through the work which he had now finished, they were become the children of God by regeneration and adoption; and his God and Father, as Man and Mediator, was become their God and Father also. Mary, as instructed, went immediately to inform the apostles; yet even her testimony did not fully satisfy them!

V. 18. Having now considered separately the different accounts given by the four evangelists of our Lord's resurrection, which seem at first sight not easily reconcilable with each other, it may be proper to state, very briefly, the most approved method of forming the whole into one consistent narration. (*Note, Matt. xxviii. 9, 10.*) It is supposed that several women agreed to meet at the sepulchre, in order to embalm the body of Jesus; and that Joanna and some others with her, having undertaken to prepare the spices, purposed being there about sun-rising; (*Luke xxiii. 55, 56. xxiv. 1—10.*) but Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, and Salome, came to view the sepulchre, while it was yet dark, (*Matt. xxviii. 1.*) Mary Magdalene seems to have arrived some short time before her companions: and observing the stone to be removed, she left them to wait for Joanna and her company, and returned back to inform Peter and John. In the mean time the other Mary and Salome came to the sepulchre, and saw the angel, as recorded by Matthew and Mark. Whilst these women returned to the city, Peter and John went to the

sepulchre, passing them at some distance, or going another way; but the angel did not appear to them. After their return Mary Magdalene saw a vision of two angels, and then Jesus himself, as here related, (*Mark xvi. 9—11.*) and immediately after Jesus appeared to the other women, as they returned to the city. (*Matt. xxviii. 9—11.*) In the mean while Joanna and her company arrived at the sepulchre, and, entering it, at first they saw nothing, only observed that the body was not there: but whilst they were perplexed on that account, two angels appeared to them, and addressed them, as the one angel had done the other women. (*Luke xxiv. 1—9.*) They therefore returned immediately to the city, and by some means found the apostles before the other women arrived, and informed them of what they had seen; upon which Peter went a second time to the sepulchre, but saw no angels, only the linen clothes lying. (*Luke xxiv. 12.*) About this time the two disciples set off for Emmaus, having only heard the report of these women, and neither that of Mary Magdalene, nor yet that of the other Mary and Salome. (*Luke xxiv. 22—24.*) These at length arrived, and informed the apostles that they had seen Jesus himself, and that two of them had been permitted to touch him: and some time after on the same day, he appeared to Peter also. There are other ways of reconciling the apparent differences between the evangelists; but this seems to answer every purpose, as will readily appear to the attentive reader. (*West upon the Resurrection.*)

V. 19—23. On the evening of the day on which our Lord arose, the apostles met together, at some room which they had procured; probably in order to join in prayer and supplication: though it seems that they were sitting at meat when Jesus came among them. (*Marg. Ref.*) The evangelist specially notes, that this was “the first day of the week;” and this day is frequently mentioned by the sacred writers, for it was evidently set apart as the Christian sabbath, in commemoration of Christ's resurrection. The disciples had shut the doors, for fear of the Jews, as perhaps they were apprehensive lest they should be prosecuted for stealing the body from the sepulchre. But, when they seem to have had no expectations of the kind, Jesus himself came and stood in the midst of them, having miraculously but silently opened the doors of the room, and entered by them. Though it be an ancient opinion, that Christ made his body penetrate through the doors, yet it is both groundless and absurd, and contrary to the very design of Christ in coming to them. It is

xi. 16. xiv. 5.
xxii. 2. Matt. v.
9.
xi. 66, 67. Matt.
xviii. 10. Heb.
x. 25.

21 ¶ But ¹ Thomas, one of the twelve,
called Didymus, ² was not with them
when Jesus came.

25 The other disciples, therefore, said
unto him, ³ We have seen the Lord.
But he said unto them, ⁴ Except I shall
see in his hands the print of the nails,
and put my finger into the print of the
nails, and thrust my hand into his side,
I will not believe.

26 And after ⁵ eight days, again his
disciples were within, ⁶ and Thomas with
them. Then came Jesus, the doors being

shut, and stood in the midst, and said,
⁷ Peace be unto you.

27 Then saith he to Thomas, ⁸ Reach
hither thy finger, and behold my hands:
and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it
into my side: ⁹ and be not faithless, but
believing.

28 And Thomas answered, and said
unto him, ¹⁰ My Lord, and my God.

29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, be-
cause thou hast seen me, thou hast be-
lieved: ¹¹ blessed are they that have not
seen, and yet have believed.

¹ groundless: for why might not he, by his power, secretly
² open the doors, his disciples not perceiving, as the angel
³ opened the prison-doors and gates, to let out Peter?
⁴ (Acts xii. 10.) It is absurd: for since Christ rose in that
natural body, which was crucified and laid in the grave,
⁵ philosophy informs us, that such a body could not pene-
trate through another more solid body. And this fancy
⁶ destroys not only the end of Christ's coming among them,
but of all that he had said and done to convince them
⁷ it was the same body that was crucified, in which he
⁸ appeared to them. It being as certain, that flesh and
⁹ bones could not penetrate through a door, as that "a spirit
hath not flesh and bones." (Luke xxiv. 39.) (Whitby.)
As, before his crucifixion, our Lord had promised the
disciples "his peace," (Note, xiv. 27.) so he now authori-
tatively pronounced and conferred it upon them, as well
as assured them that he was entirely reconciled to them
after their late misconduct. To convince them also of
the reality of his resurrection, he showed them his wound-
ed hands and side; which satisfied their doubts and filled
them with gladness. And, having repeated to them the
assurance of his peace, he also renewed and confirmed to
them their apostolic commission, sending them forth to
declare his truth to the world, and to be his ambassadors
and vicegerents, or representatives, even as the Father
had sent him, (Note, xvii. 17—19.) And, as an earnest
of the approaching descent of the Spirit upon them, as
well as to show that that blessing would be communica-
ted from his fulness, and according to his sovereign plea-
sure, he breathed upon them, and bade them receive the
Holy Ghost. (Gen. ii. 7.) Thus he showed them, that
their spiritual life, and all their ability for their work, as
well as their miraculous powers, were derived from him,
and absolutely depended on him: and then he authorized
them to declare the only method, in which sin would be
forgiven, and the character and experience of those, who
actually were pardoned, or the contrary. So that to the
end of time the rules and evidences of absolution, or con-
demnation, which they laid down, and which are contain-
ed in their writings, infallibly hold good: and all deci-
sions concerning the state of any man, or body of men,
in respect of acceptance with God, whether by preaching,
discipline, or in any other way, are valid and ratified in
heaven, provided they accord with the doctrine and rules
of the apostles, but not otherwise. (Notes, Matt. xvi. 19.
xviii. 18.)

V. 24—29. It is not known on what account Thomas
was absent at this critical time; perhaps he was even
tempted to renounce his hope in Jesus, and to leave the
company of the apostles. He, however, positively re-
fused to credit those, who had been satisfied by the tes-
timony of their senses that Jesus was risen; and with
peculiar emphasis, in language which seems to intimate
that he had witnessed and been deeply affected by all the
circumstances of our Lord's crucifixion, yet with deter-
mined incredulity, he declared he would not believe, with-
out that demonstration, which few of the human race could
possibly receive: and he might justly have been left in his
unbelief, after the rejection of such abundant proof; but
his gracious Lord was pleased to deal with him according
to the multitude of his mercies. For, eight days after, or
on the eighth day, (that is, on the first day of the week,)
the disciples were assembled as before, perhaps by some
intimation of Christ, Thomas being with them; and
Jesus again appeared among them, in the same manner,
and with the same affectionate salutation as before. He
then made Thomas sensible that he knew, without infor-
mation, all his unbelieving objections and demands, and
at the same time offered him the fullest satisfaction which
he could desire. It does not appear whether Thomas ac-
tually examined our Lord's hands and side or not: but his
knowledge of his person, the proof of his resurrection, the
concurring evidence of Jesus knowing the state of his
mind, as well as his tender compassion for him, joined to
a recollection, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, of
what Christ had said of his being One with the Father,
had such an effect upon him, that he at once confessed
him, not only to be risen from the dead, but addressed,
nay, in fact, adored him, as "His Lord, and his God." Emmanuel, God in human nature, God manifest
in the flesh, and as such entitled to all confidence, love
obedience, and worship. Nothing can more fully prove
that this was the meaning of Thomas, than the frivolous
evasion to which the Socinians are here driven, as
their only refuge from conviction: they pretend that the
apostle did not mean to call Jesus his Lord and his God,
but that he exclaimed, My Lord and my God! as people
sometimes do when greatly astonished. That such ex-
clamations are a direct violation of the third command-
ment, admits not of a doubt; yet this supposes that the apos-
tles were guilty of it in the presence of Christ, and that he
approved of it! Surely such a solution is the most impro-

xxi 25. Luke 1.
2. 4. Rom. xv
4. 1 Cor. x. 11. 2 Tim. iii 15-17 2 Pet. i. 12. 1 John 3. 4. v. 13.

30 And many other signs truly did

Jesus, in the presence of his disciples,
which are not written in this book.

bable that can be imagined! But Thomas evidently addressed these words to Christ, which is decisive against that opinion. Our Lord approved of his present faith and adoration, as justly due to him; and only gently reproved his former unbelief. He had indeed been convinced by the testimony of his senses, but there had been and were many, and there would be immense multitudes in future ages, who could not have such overbearing evidence; yet would they be peculiarly blessed in believing in him. It was not said, that they would be more blessed than Thomas; but it intimated, that if others proved as incredulous as he had been, few indeed could inherit the blessing; and it implied, that they, who never saw Jesus, and yet believed in him, would be no losers by that apparent disadvantage; yea, that believing on competent evidence, without requiring such absolute demonstration, would denote a more teachable frame of mind, and be more honourable to God. It may here be proper to add a compendious view of the evidence, which *we*, after so many ages, possess of our Lord's resurrection, which is the grand external demonstration of the truth of Christianity. It must be premised, that almost all human affairs are conducted on man's testimony; even in the great concerns of life and death, and the concurring evidence of two or three persons of good character, sober sense, and competent information, is deemed abundantly sufficient proof of any fact, which is in its own nature credible, especially if it be clear that they have no private interest in the testimony they give. But the resurrection of Christ, as connected with the divine authority of Revelation, and the glory of God in the salvation of an innumerable multitude of immortal souls, was an event in itself perfectly credible, as a sufficient reason may be assigned for the interposition of almighty Power to effect it. To prepare the way for the testimony to be given of this event, it was expressly foretold by the ancient prophets. (*Marg. Ref.*) and even the enemies of our Lord knew that he had clearly predicted it, and the very time when it would take place. Accordingly, on the day prefixed, the body was gone, after all the precautions that his crucifiers had made to secure it: and though their authority and reputation were in every respect at stake, though they could give no rational account what was become of it, and though they had the whole authority in their hands, they never ventured to bring either the soldiers who guarded the sepulchre, or the apostles who were said to have stolen the body, to any trial; but chose rather to sit down under the imputation of the basest murder, perjury, and wickedness, than excite any further inquiry into the transaction. The eleven apostles, (to whom a twelfth was shortly after added,) were a sufficient number of witnesses: they were men of plain sense and irreproachable characters; they had been constant attendants on Jesus, during some years, and could not but know him; and they unanimously testified, that they repeatedly saw him, conversed, ate, and drank with him, after his resurrection; that they examined the wounds in his hands and side; and that at length they beheld him ascend towards heaven, till a cloud intercepted their view of him. In this testimony they persisted as

with one voice during a series of years, and nothing could induce any one of them to vary from it in the smallest particular. It is evident that they had no previous expectation of the resurrection of their Lord, and, notwithstanding all the miracles which they had witnessed, they were remarkably incredulous about it. They were also exceedingly intimidated by his crucifixion, and they could have no possible temporal motive to invent and propagate a report of his resurrection, for only labour, poverty, reproach, imprisonment, suffering and death, could be expected, as their recompense for thus embracing the cause of one who had been crucified as a deceiver. In every thing else, they appeared to be the most simple, upright, holy, and pious men in the world; yet if in this they falsified, they must have been the most wicked and most artful persons that ever existed, and that without any prospect of advantage! for they spent all the rest of their lives in propagating the religion of Jesus, as risen from the dead, renouncing every worldly interest, facing opposition and persecution, enduring all kinds of hardship, prepared at all times to seal their testimony with their blood, and most of them actually suffering martyrdom in the cause, confirming their testimony with their latest breath, and leaving it in their writings as a most valuable bequest to posterity. Moreover, there were other competent witnesses, who saw Jesus after his resurrection, even to the number of five hundred persons; these also concurred in the same testimony to their latest breath, and neither terror, nor hope, nor any other motive, ever induced one of them to contradict, or dissent from the testimony of the others! If we were to stop here, we could scarcely conceive of a more complete human testimony to any matter of fact. Yet perhaps some may think, that if Jesus had openly appeared after his resurrection to the Jewish nation and their rulers, it might have put the matter beyond all doubt; but it should be considered, that if this measure had been adopted, and the rulers had still persisted in rejecting him, (as they certainly would, if their hearts had remained unchanged,) the Gospel would have had still greater disadvantages to encounter, both among the other Jews and Gentiles. On the other hand, if the whole Jewish nation and their rulers had received Jesus as the Messiah, when the Gospel had been sent among the Gentiles, it would have appeared as a plan formed of aggrandizing that nation, and as such would probably have been disregarded; and they who lived in after ages could have no further proof of this public appearance, than the testimony of those individuals who recorded it. In short, if our Lord was not to give ocular demonstration of his resurrection to every man, in every age, (which would have been impossible,) the number of competent witnesses was sufficient, and even preferable to a greater multitude. But, as if all human testimony was a small matter in such an important concern, God himself was pleased to bear witness with the apostles, in a most extraordinary manner, conferring upon them the gifts of tongues and of working miracles, by the Holy Spirit, and enabling them to impart the same to others by the laying on of their hands. Thus the number of unexceptionable witnesses was increased.

b. 20. 1. 49. vi. 19.
20. ix. 59-10.
P. 16. 7. 12.
Matth. xvi. 16.
xxvi. 54. Acts xiii. 57. ix. 20. Rom. i. 3, 4. 1 John iv. 15. v. 1. 10. 20. 2 John 9. Rev.
xi. 13.

31 But ^b these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ,

the Son of God; and that ^b believing ye might have life ^k through his name.

i. iii. 15, 16, 18, 26. v. 21. 29. 40. vi. 40. Mark xxi. 16. 1 Pet. i. 9. 1 John ii. 23-25. v. 10-13. — k Luke xxiv. 47. Acts iii. 16. x. 43. xlii. 38, 39.

the testimony to our Lord's resurrection was diffused on every side, and his most inveterate enemies could not deny that most extraordinary miracles were performed by those who attested that event. In this manner the number of the disciples of Jesus was speedily multiplied, by thousands being converted from among those who had just before demanded his crucifixion, and Christianity got ground rapidly on every side, in opposition to all the wealth, power, learning, superstition, and philosophy of the world, and by unarmed, unlearned, poor, and despised instruments; till at length whole nations embraced the religion of the crucified Nazarene, as the prophets had expressly foretold. This effect, which could be ascribed to no power but that of God, and the continuance of so humbling and holy a religion in the world to this day, form a demonstration *even to us* of this important fact, nor was any past event since the beginning ever proved with such a complicated and abundant evidence. St. Paul's conversion, and the prophecies contained in the writings of those who testified our Lord's resurrection, and which have been accomplishing for almost eighteen hundred years, may be considered as additional divine attestations.

V. 30, 31. (xxi. 24, 25.) *The signs* here spoken of seem to refer to the evidences of our Lord's resurrection; (*Acts i. 3.*) of which there were far more than it was necessary to record; but these were committed to writing, to induce all those, who should ever read them, to believe that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah, the King of Israel, the Saviour of sinners, and the incarnate Son of God, that by this faith they might obtain eternal life, in his name, for his sake, and by his mercy, truth, and power. (*1 Pet. i. 8.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-10.

They who love the Lord will seek him early and diligently, and notwithstanding all sorrows, delays, and discouragements, they will assuredly find him. External forms and empty notions will no more satisfy the awakened inquirer, than the sepulchre and the grave clothes did Mary and the apostles, who sought the Lord Jesus in faith and love. Under a large proportion of preaching by men called Christians, we are ready to say, "They have taken away the Lord, and we know not where they have laid him;" but the broken-hearted disciple cannot be thus contented, though others may be filled with admiration.—They who are equally in earnest do not always make equal progress; some men take things more quickly, others investigate more deeply; and they may be mutually helpful, in bringing each other to understand the Scripture, and to establishment in the faith.

V. 11-23.

Great love is manifested by proportionable sorrow, when the beloved object is removed; thus the humble believer

mourns, when he seeks in vain for the comfort of the Redeemer's presence, or the opportunity of honouring him. At such times, he is apt to imagine that others as well as himself, must be thinking of his Beloved: and the same state of mind often incapacitates him from perceiving the evidences of the Lord's love to him, or the grounds of his own consolation. Thus he is led to weep, when he should rejoice: but such mourners shall be comforted; angels rejoice over them, and are ready to minister to their comfort; Jesus will "manifest himself to them, as "he doth not unto the world:" and in this manner the most disconsolate penitents, and the chief of sinners, become the messengers of peace and comfort to others also. Our gracious Redeemer in his highest exaltation designs to call his disciples *brethren*, notwithstanding all their falls and ingratitude! and when we consider how low he stooped, and how much he suffered, in order to form the relation and to fulfil the part of a brother to us poor sinful worms; we shall not hesitate to expect the greatest honour and felicity from him. He has "ascended to his Father, and our Father, to his God, and our God;" and there he continually manages all our concerns with the most perfect love and faithfulness: yet when we assemble in his name, (especially on his holy day,) he will meet with us, and speak peace to us: he will assure us of his forgiveness; counterbalance our sorrows and alarms from persecuting foes; and communicate his sacred Spirit of life, love, holiness, and consolation; according as our services, or our difficulties, require his blessed assistance, supports, and influences.

V. 24-31.

When disciples are needlessly absent from the assemblies of God's people, they will surely be losers; and their unbelieving fears and sorrows are often prolonged, as a chastisement for their negligence. Indeed unbelief is the source of almost all our sins and disquietudes. We all have too much copied the example of Thomas's incredulity, by refusing to believe the word of God, and to rely on his help, when our experience of his care hath been abundantly sufficient; and we are often apt to demand such proof of his truths, and of his will respecting us, as we have no right to expect. But he does not deal with us after our iniquities, and therefore we are not consumed. He knows all our difficulties and temptations; he rebukes and obviates the unbelief of those whose hearts are upright before him; he will convince them who he is, and what he hath done for them; that they may trust, love, and obey him as their Lord and their God. We have not indeed that kind of ocular proof, with which Thomas was favoured, and which infidels still demand; yet we are equally within the reach of the blessing. We have abundant evidence of the Redeemer's resurrection and glory: some of us, like Thomas, have withheld our credence, till we could no longer be faithless, but were constrained to believe: and these things were written for the benefit of every reader,

CHAP. XXI.

Jesus appears to his disciples, at the sea of Tiberias; makes himself known by a miraculous draught of fishes, and eats with them, 1—14. He thrice demands of Peter, whether he loved him; and thrice requires him to show his love, by feeding his lambs and sheep, 15—17. He foretells Peter's martyrdom, by commanding him to follow him, 18, 19; and reproves his curiosity concerning John, 20—23. John asserts the truth of his testimony; and shows that Jesus did many miracles besides, too numerous to be recorded, 24, 25.

AFTER ^a these things, ^b Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at ^c the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he *himself*.

2 There were together Simon Peter, ^d and Thomas called Didymus, ^e and Nathanael ^f of Cana in Galilee, ^g and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

3 Simon Peter saith unto him, ^h I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; ⁱ and that night they caught nothing.

4 But, when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore; ^k but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

5 Then Jesus saith unto them, ^l Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

6 And he said unto them, ^m Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. ⁿ They cast, therefore, and now they were not able to draw it, for ^o the multitude of fishes.

7 Therefore ^p that disciple whom Jesus loved, saith unto Peter, ^q It is the Lord. Now ^r when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt *his* fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

8 And the other disciples came in a little ship, (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred ^s cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

9 As soon then as they were come to land, ^t they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three; ^u and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

12 Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples ^v durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Jesus ^w then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

14 This is now ^x the third time, that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

a xx. 19—29.
b Matt xxvi. 32.
c Luke 7. 16.
d Mark xvi. 7.
e vi. 1. 23.

d xx. 29.

e i. 45—51.

f ii. 1. 11. iv. 45.

g Josh. xix. 28.

h Matt. iv. 21, 22.

i 2 Kings vi. 1—

2. Matt. iv. 18—

20. Luke v. 10.

ii. 1. Acts xxi.

3. xx. 34. 1 Cor.

ix. 6. 1 Thes. ii. 7.

5. 2 Thes. iii. 7.

—9.

i Luke v. 5. 1 Cor.

iii. 7.

k xx. 14. Luke

xiv. 15. 16. 31.

l Or. Sirs. 1 John

ii. 13. 18. Gr.

1 Ps. xxviii. 3.

3. Luke xiv. 41—

4. Phil. iv. 11—

13. 19. Heb.

xiii. 5.

m Matt. xviii. 27.

n Luke v. 4—6.

o i. 5. Ps. viii. 6.

Heb. ii. 6—9.

p Acts ii. 41. 1v.

q 20. 24. xiii. 23.

r xx. 28. xx. 28.

s xx. 28. Pa.

cxviii. 23. Mark

xi. 5. Luke ii.

11. Acts ix. 36.

x. 30. 1 Cor.

xv. 47. Jam. ii.

t Cant. viii. 7.

u Matt. xiv. 25.

29. Luke viii. 27.

v 2 Cor. v. 14.

s Deut. iii. 11.

t 1 Kings xix. 5.

u Matt. iv. 14.

Mark viii. 3.

Luke xii. 29—

31.

xiv. 27. xvi. 19.

Gen. xxiii. 29.

30. Mark ix. 32.

Luke ix. 45.

y Luke xxiv. 42.

43. Acts x. 41.

z xx. 19. 26.

“that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that, believing, ye may have life through his name.”

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI. V. 1—14. This transaction seems to have occurred after the disciples had returned into Galilee, and before Jesus had met them on the mountain, according to his appointment. Peter, being unemployed, and perhaps in want, proposed to go a fishing, and his brethren accompanied him: but, though they laboured during the whole night, the most proper time for fishing, they were entirely unsuccessful. This was a trial of their faith and patience; and also an emblem of the discouragements, which the most able, faithful, and laborious ministers often meet with in their work. In the morning Jesus stood by the shore, near to the vessel, but he was pleased by some means to prevent their knowing him. As they drew near to land, he accosted them in a very friendly and familiar manner, (for so the term rendered *Children* seems to have been used in common discourse, and not as signifying a

father's address to his family;) and he asked them whether they had any meat? This might be understood either with reference to their success in fishing, or as an inquiry whether they had any provisions to dispose of? When they had answered in the negative, he directed them to cast the net on the *right hand* side of the ship, and then they would succeed better: and though he appeared as a stranger, and they, being weary with toiling all night, had probably desisted from fishing, yet they followed his directions, and enclosed so many fishes, that they were not able to draw the net into the vessel again. This unexpected success convinced John that it was “The Lord;” for probably it brought a former miracle of this kind to his remembrance. (Notes, &c. Luke v. 1—11.) As soon as he had informed Peter of his opinion, the latter (full of love and gratitude to Jesus, who had so graciously forgiven his late base denial of him,) entirely disregarded the net and the fishes; and, girding on his upper garment, (having been stripped for his work,) he leaped into the sea, and swam to shore, as they were not much above a hundred yards distant from it: 3 Z

15 ¶ So, when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, ^a son of Jonas, ^b lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; ^c thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, ^d Feed my lambs.

16 He saith to him again, ^e the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed ^f my sheep.

but the other disciples abode in the vessel to draw the net to land. When this was done, they found that Jesus had already made preparation for their refreshment after the labour of the night, probably by miracle; but he ordered them to bring also of the fish which they had then taken; and in doing this they found a great number of very large fishes; yet the net was wonderfully preserved from being broken; most likely it was borrowed. This draught of fishes might be sold for a considerable sum of money, which the apostles would have occasion for, on their return to Jerusalem, before the day of Pentecost. After they had secured the fishes, Jesus called them to come, and partake of the repast prepared for them; and, in his usual manner, he took the provisions and gave unto them; but they ventured not to ask him who he was, being satisfied it was their Lord, though he probably assumed for a time a different appearance than usual. This was the third time that he showed himself after his resurrection to several of his disciples at once; for he had twice come among them at Jerusalem, when they were met together on the evening of the first day of the week. It does not become us to inquire, where, or how, he spent the rest of his time previously to his ascension.

V. 15—17. The case of Peter required a more particular address than that of the other apostles; in order that both he and others might derive the greater benefit from his fall and recovery. Our Lord therefore on this occasion, (laying aside his disguise,) inquired of him, (by his original name, as if he had forfeited that of Peter through his instability,) whether "he loved him *more than these*?" The latter clause might be interpreted of his employment and gains as a fisherman, and be considered as a demand, whether he loved Jesus above all his secular interests? But Peter's answer determines us to another interpretation: he had, before his fall, in effect, said that he loved his Lord more than any of the other disciples did; for he had boasted, that "though all men forsook him, yet would not he." And Jesus now asked of him, whether he would stand to this, and aver that he loved him more than the disciples then present did? To this he answered modestly, by saying that Jesus knew that he loved him, without professing to love him more than others. Our Lord therefore renewed his appointment to the ministerial and apostolical office; at the same time commanding him "to feed his lambs," or his *little lambs*, even the least of them. (for the word is a diminutive.) This inti-

17 He saith unto ¹ him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was ² grieved, because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, ³ Lord, thou knowest all things; ⁴ thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, ⁵ Feed my sheep.

18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: ⁶ but when thou shalt be old, thou

mated to him, that his late experience of his own weakness ought to render him peculiarly condescending, compassionate, tender, and attentive to the meanest and feeblest believers; and to such as were harassed with temptations, or overtaken with a fault, or manifested many and great infirmities; as the shepherd takes the greatest care of the most weak and sickly lambs of his flock. (Luke xxii. 32.) In a short time afterwards our Lord repeated his question: but as Peter had dropped the latter part of it, he urged that no further; which proves the interpretation above given to be the true one: for that is not true love of Christ, which is not decidedly superior to our love of earthly things. When Peter had again appealed to him, that he knew he really did love him, Jesus ordered him to show that love by feeding his sheep; or by diligently labouring to promote the edification of every description of believers, as well as to spread the knowledge of his salvation. But as Peter had thrice denied Christ, so he was pleased to repeat the same question a *third time*: this grieved Peter, as it reminded him that he had given sufficient cause for this repeatedly questioning the sincerity of his love to his Lord. Conscious, however, of his integrity, he more solemnly appealed to Christ, (as knowing all things, even the secrets of his heart,) that he knew that he loved him with cordial affection, notwithstanding the inconsistency of his late behaviour. Our Lord then tacitly allowed the truth of this profession, and renewed his charge to him to feed his sheep. The arguments of the papists for the supremacy of the pope, from this passage, only prove their cause to be desperate: such a pre-eminence, however, as is here described, would not much suit their inclinations. To be more abundantly laborious in feeding the weakest of Christ's flock, with the wholesome food of his pure doctrine, from love to him and his cause; to submit to any abasement or hardship, and to face any peril or persecution, in this work of compassion and tender care to the poor, the tempted, and afflicted; this is a pre-eminence, which excites the ambition of but few, compared with the number of those, who aspire after ecclesiastical authority and distinction. It is indeed true, that one of the words here translated *feed*, may be rendered *rule*; but then it is the *rule* of a careful shepherd over his valued flock; and very different from that of those, who, both in opposition to Peter's example and exhortation, have pretended to derive authority from him, "as lords over God's heritage." (1 Pet. v. 3.)

shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

19 This spake he, signifying ^a by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

20 Then Peter, turning about, ^a seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved, following; ^b which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

21 Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what *shalt* this man do?

22 Jesus saith unto him, ^a If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? follow thou me.

23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, ^a what *is that* to thee?

24 ¶ This is the disciple which testified of these things, and wrote these things; and ^a we know that his testimony is true.

25 And ^a there are also many other things which Jesus did; the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose ^b that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

p. xli. 27. 28.
q. Cor. v. 4.
r. 1 Pet. iv. 11-14. 2 Pet. i. 14.

r. 22. xli. 28. xlii. 28. 27. Matt. x. 38. xvi. 21-25. Mark vii. 23-38. Luke ix. 22-25.
s. 7. 24. xx. 2. xlii. 23-26.

u. Matt. xxiv. 3. 4. Luke xii. 3. 21. Acts i. 6. 7. x. Matt. xvi. 27. 28. xxiv. 3. 27. 44. xxv. 21. Mark ix. 1. 1 Cor. iv. 5. xi. 26. Rev. ii. 25. iii. 11. xlii. 7. 20.

y. Deut. xxix. 26. Job. xxviii. 28. xxix. 13. Dan. iv. 35.

z. xix. 35. 1 John i. 1. 2. v. 8. 3 John 12.

aa. xx. 30, 31. Job. xxvi. 14. Ps. 31. 8. lxxi. 15. Ec. xii. 12. Matt. xi. 5. Acts x. 36. xx. 35. Heb. xi. 32. b. Am. vii. 10. Matt. xix. 24.

V. 18.—23. Peter had earnestly professed his readiness to die with Christ, yet had shamefully failed, when put to the trial: but our Lord next assured him, that he would at length be called on, and enabled to perform that engagement. In his youth he had been used to gird himself, (as he had just before girded on his fisher's coat,) and to walk at liberty as he pleased; but in his old age, he would be required to stretch out his hands, that others might bind him, and carry him to endure those sufferings to which nature must be reluctant. This, we are told, signified the death, by which he would *glorify God*, as a martyr for his truth. It is generally agreed that Peter was crucified, perhaps about forty years after this; but the circumstances of it are variously related. Jesus next called upon him to signify his readiness to adhere to his cause, even unto death, by rising up and following him; with which Peter complied without hesitation: but turning about he saw John also, without any command, showing the same willingness to suffer death for the sake, and after the example, of his beloved Lord: and this led Peter to inquire, What he was to do? Was he also to be a martyr? To this our Lord replied, that if it were his will he should abide on earth till his coming, that was no concern of Peter's, who ought not to indulge a vain curiosity, but to follow him, as a token of his readiness to adhere to his instructions, to obey his commandments, to copy his example, and to suffer for his sake. It is most probable that Jesus meant, his coming in power to set up his kingdom, and to execute vengeance on the unbelieving Jewish nation; but the disciples had confused views of this subject, and supposed he meant that John would live till he came to judgment, or that he would at length be translated to heaven, as Enoch and Elijah had been; or that, being Christ's beloved disciple, he would escape death: but the words had no such meaning. John lived long after the destruction of Jerusalem, and after the other apostles; and he seems to have died a natural death at last in extreme old age.

V. 24, 25. We are here informed that John was the writer of this Gospel; and some think that it was sanctioned, as of divine authority, by the elders of the churches

of Asia; as it is added, "We know that his testimony is *as true*;" but perhaps it only means the assurance of John and the other inspired writers, concerning the infallible truth of their testimony. To this it is subjoined, that the actions of Jesus, which were worthy of observation, were vastly more numerous; and that but a small part had actually been committed to writing. The concluding words are understood by many to be *hyperbolic*: but perhaps they signify, that if every one of the actions and words of Jesus had been written, the books containing them would have been so voluminous, as to counteract their own intention; for men, in the present state of the world, would neither be able to purchase, peruse, or remember them; and the men of the world would have even made the multiplicity of them an additional reason for not receiving them. To the whole, the evangelist affixes "Amen," as a confirmation of what he had written, and to express his approbation of the divine conduct in this and in every other particular.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—14.

Our blessed Lord is often near us, in respect of his providential care and his spiritual consolations, when we are ready to conclude that he is far off. He does not allow his ministers to entangle themselves with the affairs of this life, or his people to perplex themselves with worldly cares; but he approves of honest industry, and vouchsafes his special presence and blessing to those who conscientiously attend to their present duty. Whilst he provides for the souls of his disciples, he kindly inquires into their temporal wants, and allows them to state them to him, as children to a loving Father: and he will always be mindful to provide for them such things as are needful. None of our labours can prosper without his blessing; but our dependence on him is peculiarly to be recognized in performing the work of the ministry; and he often permits his servants to labour for a time without visible success, to prove their faith and patience, to render them more observant of his directions, or more simply dependent on his

assistance; and that their usefulness, when vouchsafed, may more evidently appear to be his work.

V. 15—17.

It is well, when our falls and mistakes render us more humble, watchful, and zealous. Our gracious Lord will readily pardon the sins of his believing servants: but he will rebuke them, in one way or other; that they may be more sensible how greatly he abhors their offences, notwithstanding his tender mercy to their souls. The sincerity of our love to him must at length be brought to the test; and it behooves us to inquire seriously, whether we are able to stand the examination. If we indeed love him, his perfections, his truths, his precepts, and his ordinances will be cordially approved, received, and observed by us; we shall love those most, who appear most to love and resemble him; we shall aim to render our thankful returns for his unspeakable mercies, and to recommend him to those around us; we shall take pleasure in speaking of him, or to him, in hearing him praised, and in promoting his glory; we shall be ready to labour, venture, or suffer for his sake; yet after all we shall be grieved and ashamed that we love him no more, and serve him no better. They who thus love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, have a consciousness of it, notwithstanding all their defects; and, as they believe and are assured that he knoweth all things, and especially that he knoweth whether they love him or not; they will apply to him to determine the question for them, and to enable them to love him, (and that more and more,) when they cannot confidently aver that they do. As obedience is the general evidence of our love to Jesus, so the love of his poor, afflicted, and despised people for his sake, and an endeavour to be useful to the meanest of his flock, is that particular expression which he requires of every one. No man therefore can be qualified to feed the lambs and sheep of Christ, who does not love the good Shepherd more than all secular emolument and preferment: and the professed ministers, who are too ambitious, haughty, slothful, delicate, studious of human learning, or occupied in worldly pursuits and pleasures, to apply themselves earnestly to feed the souls of the people, even the weakest and poorest of them, with the doctrines and instructions of God's word, will be left under an awful condemnation, as being utterly destitute of the love of Christ. (*Marg. Ref.*) They who have been greatly tempted, and have had much humiliating experience of their own frailty

and sinfulness, and who have had much forgiven them; generally prove the most tender, compassionate, and attentive pastors of weak, bruised, and trembling believers, and the best guides of young converts: and the Lord often leaves those whom he loves, to have many painful conflicts with temptation and in-dwelling sin, as well as much experience of his tender compassion, in order to render them more gentle to their weak brethren, and to the lambs of his flock. Thus, when they feel their unworthiness for the least work in his service, they become far abler ministers, than they were when they had a much better opinion of themselves, and of their qualifications for the ministry.

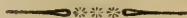
V. 18—23.

The resolutions, which upright young converts rashly form and break, are sometimes afterwards performed, when in a course of years they have been humbled and proved. They must first learn, that "without Christ they can do nothing;" and then they will be shown, that "they can do all things through him who strengtheneth them." Yet sufferings, pain, and death, will appear formidable to the most experienced Christian; nor would he be willing to meet them, did he not hope to glorify God by his sufferings; and were he not desirous of leaving a sinful world, that he may be present with his beloved Lord. With these objects presented to his faith, he becomes ready to obey the Redeemer's call, and to follow him through death to glory; and the more love he hath experienced, the readier will he be to tread in his steps. But curiosity is too apt to interrupt us in this course: a thousand questions are started and discussed, about which, Jesus, as it were, says to us, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." If we attend to this voice, "death will be gain," and we shall be ready for his coming: and while here, we must live by faith in the sure testimony of his word, which never faileth those who trust in it. We ought to bless God for all that is written in the Scriptures; but we may also be thankful that they are so compendious: it would not suit our situation, our engagements, or our capacities in this life, to have a more copious revelation; and we want no uncertain traditions, or human additions: but we may anticipate in imagination the joy which we shall receive in heaven, from a more complete knowledge of all that Jesus did and said; as well as for the conduct of his providence and grace, in his dealings with us. May this be the happiness of the writer and of every reader. Amen, Amen.

THE ACTS

OF THE

APOSTLES.



Luke, "the beloved Physician," was undoubtedly the writer of this book; and, intending it as an appendix to his gospel, he inscribes it likewise to Theophilus. (Preface to the Gospel of St. Luke.) Indeed the whole may be considered as one publication in two parts: but the convenience of having the four Gospels together, seems to have induced Christians in early times to divide it, by inserting St. John's gospel between the parts. As the history terminates with St. Paul's imprisonment at Rome, during two years, which certainly ended before A. D. 65; it may fairly be concluded, that it was written within thirty or thirty-one years after our Lord's crucifixion: for it can hardly be supposed, that the sacred writer would have closed his narrative so abruptly, and not have carried it on something further, had he composed it at a later period. The early reception also of this book, as authentic and divine, among the primitive Christians, has been sufficiently proved by learned men, from the testimony of ancient writers. But the circumstance, which most of all demands our attention, and raises our expectations respecting it, is this: it records the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies concerning the kingdom of the promised Messiah, and the manner in which it should be established in the world; and also of those predictions, or promises that our Lord gave to his disciples, "while he was yet with them," concerning the powers with which they should be endued, the success which would attend their labours, and the persecutions which awaited them.—It is a fact which cannot be doubted, that the religion of Jesus the Nazarene, who expired on a cross at Jerusalem almost eighteen hundred years ago, was soon very extensively propagated among the nations; that it obtained a permanent establishment, which it preserves to this day; and that the prophets had foretold that this would be the case, as to the kingdom of the Messiah; but the book before us, is the only history, which expressly relates the manner in which this religion was at first promulgated.—Here we are informed, that eleven obscure men, whom Jesus had called to be his attendants and apostles, having continued with him till his crucifixion, saw and conversed with him after his resurrection, and beheld him ascend from them towards heaven, "till a cloud received him out of their sight." In a few days, they having appointed one, in the room of the twelfth, who had betrayed his Lord and destroyed himself, and being accompanied with a small number of disciples, the Holy Spirit, according to the promise of their Lord, descended upon them, in a most extraordinary manner, enabling them to speak divers languages, and work stupendous miracles; and in all respects qualifying them for their arduous undertaking.—Accordingly, without further delay, within less than two months from the time in which Jesus was crucified, and at Jerusalem, under the immediate notice of his crucifiers, they began boldly to declare that he was risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, and exalted at the right hand of God; that he was the promised Messiah, the Prince of Life, the Saviour and Judge of the world, and as such entitled to all confidence, obedience, and adoration; and to charge the people, the priests, and the rulers, with murdering the Lord of glory. They were themselves unarmed and unprotected, except by a divine power; they possessed neither human learning, eloquence, nor influence; yet they had all the wisdom and the folly, the learning and the ignorance, the religion and the irreligion, of the whole world to encounter; as well as the power of rulers and princes to oppose them; notwithstanding which, they became decidedly and permanently triumphant. They employed no weapons, but simple testimony to the facts which they had witnessed, cogent arguments, affectionate persuasions, holy beneficent lives, fervent prayers, and patient sufferings even unto death.—With the Jews they reasoned from the Scriptures of the Old Testament; and showed how exactly these had been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth; and when they afterwards went

among the Gentiles, they reasoned with them, from such principles as they themselves acknowledged.—Proceeding in this manner, and every where attended by a divine power, both manifested in undeniable miracles, and inwardly preparing men's hearts to receive the truth; they had such astonishing success, that many hundreds of thousands, if not millions, not only from among the Jews and proselytes, but also from the grossest and most licentious idolaters, became the avowed disciples of the crucified Jesus, and the devoted worshippers and servants of the one living and true God. Thus, in the Acts of the apostles, there is given us a history of the manner, in which the most extraordinary revolution that ever took place in the moral and religious state of the world, was first begun; the effects of which were afterwards extended far more widely, till Christianity became the religion of powerful and numerous nations, and superseded the idolatries and superstitious, in which they were before enveloped: and if this account be true, the Gospel must be divine.

Now one most extraordinary circumstance attends this narrative; namely, if the truth of it be not admitted, there is no other history extant in the world which can be substituted in its place: and thus an event, productive of far more extensive and important consequences, than any other that ever occurred on earth, took place in a manner, of which no account has been transmitted to posterity!—This book is indeed the report of friends to the cause; but there is no counter-report with which we may compare it. Neither Jewish scribes and priests, nor Gentile philosophers, historians, or moralists, ever attempted, that we find, to write a history of the first introduction of Christianity, to confront the account given by the Christians. The things here recorded “were not done in a corner.” Jerusalem, Cesarea, Antioch, and Ephesus, all great and celebrated cities, nay, Rome itself, the proud capital of the world, were among the places, in which the miracles are attested to have been wrought and the success attained, in the full view of vehement and powerful opposers; who never ventured to deny the facts, though they could not account for them without allowing the truth of the Gospel.—Indeed the silence of the scribes and priests, who were loudly called upon to vindicate themselves from the charge of the most atrocious crimes, and even that of the heathen writers, in such a cause, is a plain confession, that they had nothing to say.

Some modern skeptics, however, insinuate in a covert manner, that a very different account might be given of the triumphs of Christianity, than that contained in scripture; but all their observations are grounded in misapprehension, or misrepresentation. The time for giving another history of these events is long since past, and there are no materials for composing one. And indeed, to suppose that such a religion as Christianity, which directly opposes every corrupt passion of the human heart, without making any allowance, either to persons in the highest stations, or to its most zealous friends, could have prevailed in the world as it has done, by such instruments and means, and in the face of such powerful opposition; without the power of God succeeding it; is to assume, without shadow of proof, a fact immensely more incredible, than any or all the miracles, recorded in scripture.

We must not, however, here expect a full and particular history of the labours and successes of the apostles and primitive evangelists: a select specimen alone is given. After the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and the first successes and sufferings of the apostles, little is recorded in the Scripture concerning most of them. Indeed the names of more than half of them are never mentioned after the first chapter: yet it cannot reasonably be doubted, but that they laboured, suffered, and prospered, as their brethren did: though most of the ancient records and traditions concerning them, are so mingled with fiction, as not to be entitled to much credit. Some other labourers are likewise brought forward, as Stephen the first martyr, Philip the evangelist, Barnabas, Silas, and others. But the conversion of Saul the persecutor, with his subsequent labours, sufferings, and triumphs, as the apostle of the Gentiles, occupies a large proportion of the book; and the mention of the other apostles, in that part of the history, is occasional and brief. Peter, indeed, the apostle of the circumcision, was chosen to instruct Cornelius and his friends (the first-fruits from among the Gentiles,) doubtless to avoid giving needless offence to the Gentiles; and the martyrdom of James the brother of John, is briefly related. Indeed the labours of St. Paul are recorded in a very compendious manner. The events of several years are summed up in two or three chapters. And, though after Luke the historian joined the apostle, and became his faithful companion, (which is shown by his using the first person plural in the narrative,) he is somewhat more circumstantial: yet the epistles of St. Paul prove, that his labours, persecutions, and successes were vastly greater, and the instructions which he gave his converts far more particular, than a cursory reading of this history would lead us to suppose. At the same time, the remarkable coincidence, even in the minute particulars, of the

history and the epistles, is of such a nature, as could never have taken place, had not both been genuine; which will appear more fully, when the epistles come under our consideration.

But the book, on which we now enter, contains also a specimen of true believers, as illustrating the nature and effects of genuine Christianity: and it should carefully be noted, that in every age, all those multitudes who are called Christians, yet bear no resemblance to this specimen, will be driven away as chaff, at the great decisive day: and that the more we are like these primitive believers, when "great grace was upon them all," the more evident it is, that we shall "be numbered with them in glory everlasting."—Some intimations are also given of the manner, in which the primitive Church was constituted and governed, its ministers were appointed, and its ordinances administered: yet it can hardly be supposed, but that the eager disputants of all those parties, into which the Church is at present unhappily divided, must feel rather disappointed in this respect, and inwardly wish, that more particular and explicit information had been given on these subjects: but this the Lord for wise reasons has seen good to withhold.

A. D. 33.

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CHAP. I.

The sacred writer addresses his narrative to Theophilus, 1. Christ, being risen, instructs his disciples; commands them to wait at Jerusalem for the promise of the Holy Spirit; and ascends to heaven in their sight, 2—9. Two angels assure them that he would come again in like manner, 10, 11. The apostles, at Jerusalem, continue in prayer with the other disciples, 12—14. Peter calls on them to appoint another apostle instead of Judas, in whose awful doom the Scripture had been fulfilled, 15—22. Matthias is chosen by lot, accompanied with prayer, 23—26.

NOTES.

CHAP. I. V. 1—3. (Notes, &c. Luke i. 1—4.) St. Luke began this history by referring his pious friend Theophilus to that Gospel, which formed the introduction to it. He had there given a specimen of the miracles, actions, and doctrine of Christ, and the general scope of all that he did and taught, from his entrance on his public ministry at his baptism by John, till his ascension into heaven, after that he had given proper instructions and injunctions to his chosen apostles. The phrase, "began both, &c." simply means what Jesus had done and taught. The use of the word *all* in this connexion, when so many miracles and discourses of our Lord are recorded by the other evangelists, is a full demonstration, that arguments tending to establish *universal* conclusions, from this general term, must be precarious. The expression "by the Holy Ghost," may either refer to our Lord's choosing the apostles, or to his giving them commandments after his resurrection: but the latter seems to be intended; as he "breathed upon them, and bade them receive the Holy Ghost;" and as he then "opened their understandings, that they might understand the scriptures." All that Jesus did and taught, in respect of his human nature,

THE former treatise have I made, Luke i—xxiv. b Luke i. 3. c of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, h Luke i. 22. Matt. i. 23. xi. 5. Luke vii. 21—23. xxi. 19. John x. 32—38. xviii. 19—21. i Pet. i. 21—23.

2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles, whom he had chosen.

3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

d3. Mark xxi. 19. Luke i. 51. xxiv. 51. John vi. 62. xiii. 1. 3. xvi. 28. xviii. 13. xx. 17. Eph. iv. 8—10. i Tim. iii. 16. Heb. vi. 19. 20. 18. 24. i Pet. iii. 22. e x. 38. Is. xlii. 3. xliii. i. xlviii. 16. lix. 20. 51. lxi. i. Matt. iii. 16. li. 34. Rev. i. 1. ii. 7. 11. 17. 29. iii. 8. 13. 22. —f Matt. xxviii. 19. 30. Mark xvi. 15—18. Luke xxiv. 45—49. —g 13 x. 40—42. Mat. x. 1—4. Mar. i. 14—19. Luke vi. 13—16. John vi. 70. 71. xvi. 18. xx. 20. 21. Gal. i. 1. Eph. ii. 20. 21. 22. i Pet. i. 2. Rev. xxi. 14. h xiii. 31. Matt. xxviii. 9. 16. 17. Mark xvi. 10—14. Luke xxiv. 30—40. John xx. 14—16. 19. 20. 27. 28. xxi. 1. 6. 9—7. i John i. 1, 2. —i Deut. ix. 5. —j 1 Kings xix. 8. Matt. iv. 2. —k xxviii. 31. Dan. ii. 44. 45. Matt. iii. 2. xxi. 43. Luke xvii. 20, 21. xxiv. 44—49. Rom. xiv. 17. Col. i. 13. i. 12. i. 12.

is ascribed to the Holy Spirit, as well as the endowments that he conferred upon his disciples. It is also observed, that Jesus showed himself alive to his apostles, after his death, by many signs, or evidences, which could not possibly deceive them: as he was seen of them, at different times, for the space of forty days, and conversed freely with them concerning those things which related to the establishment, privileges, and laws of that, "kingdom of God," which was about to be set up on earth, by the preaching of his Gospel. "By speaking to, by walking, and by eating with them, he gave them a certain indication that he lived; that he was seen and handled by them, was a sure evidence that he had a true and natural body; that he permitted Thomas to view the scars of his hands and feet, and put his hand into his side, was a certain token, that the body raised was the same which was crucified, and pierced by the soldier's lance."—"Concerning the kingdom of God." "Namely, Of teaching the doctrine of this kingdom to all nations; and receiving them into it by baptism, who believed, and professed to own it: of the benefits which were promised to them who cordially believed their doctrine; and the condemnation which belonged to them who would not

* Or, eating together, *see* x. 41. Luke xxiv. 41—43.

1 Luke xxiv. 40
11 Matt. x. 11
12 Luke x. 11
13 12 John vi.
20 xiv. 16, 17
26 xv. 26 xvi.
70 x. 22
21 xi. 15, 16. xix.
4—6. Matt. iii.
11. Mark i. 9.
Luke iii. 16.
John i. 33—34.
1 Cor. xii. 13.
19 iii. 5, 6.
o ii. 1—4. 16—21.
Joel ii. 28—32.
3. Matt. xxiv. 34.
1 John xxi. 21, 22.
q Gen. xlix. 10.
15. 1. 26. ix. 6.
7. Jer. xxiii. 5.
6. xxxiii. 15—
17. 26. Ez.
xxviii. 24—27.
Dan. vii. 27.
Hos. iii. 4. 5.
Joel iii. 16—21.
4. ix. 11. Ols.
17—21. Mic. v.
2. Zeph. iii. 15.
—17. Zech. ix. 9.
10. Matt. xxi. 21.
Luke xxii. 29.
xvii. 26. Deut. u.
xxiii. 29. Dan.
ix. 21. Matt. xxiv. 36. Mark xiii. 32. Luke xxi. 34. Eph. i. 10. 1 Thes. c. 1. 1 Tim. vi.
15. 2 Tim. iii. 1. —s Matt. xx. 23. Mark x. 40. —t ii. 1—4. vi. 8. viii. 19. Mic. iii.
8. Zech. iv. 6. Luke x. 19. Rev. xi. 3—6. —Or, the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you. Luke i. 35. xxi. 49. Rom. xv. 19. —u 22. ii. 32. vi. 15. iv. 33. v. 32. x. 39.
41—xiii. xxi. 15. Mark xvii. 15. Luke xxiv. 46—48. John xv. 27.

4 And, * being assembled together with them, ¹ commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for ^m the promise of the Father, which, *said he*, ye have heard of me.

5 For ⁿ John truly baptized with water; but ^o ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost ^p not many days hence.

6 When they, therefore, were come together, they asked of him, saying, ^v Lord, wilt thou at this time ^a restore again the kingdom to Israel?

7 And he said unto them, ^r It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 But ^t ye shall receive [†] power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both

in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, ^x and in Samaria, and ^y unto the uttermost part of the earth.

9 And, ^z when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up: ^a and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10 And, ^b while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, ^c two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, ^d Ye men of Galilee, ^e why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, ^f shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

12 ¶ Then returned they unto Jerusalem, ^g from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem ^h a sabbath-day's journey.

'believe it; of the encouragements and assistances he would afford them in the propagation of it, by his continual presence with them, and by the assistance of his Spirit; and by the miracles by which their doctrine should be confirmed.' (*Whitby.*) (*Marg. Ref.*) It is, however, highly probable, that a great deal more passed on these most interesting subjects between our Lord and his apostles, than is any where recorded.

V. 4—8. The apostles and disciples returned from Galilee to Jerusalem, and assembled there by their Lord's appointment. Though he was about to be taken from them, and they would seem to be without employment in that city; yet they were ordered not to depart thence, but to wait there for the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, which he had promised to send them from the Father, (*Marg. Ref.*) for it was proper that this extraordinary event should occur in the same place where Jesus had before been publicly crucified. This would fully answer to what John had testified concerning him; as it would be a most remarkable baptism by the Holy Spirit, both communicating to them miraculous powers, and more abundantly illuminating and sanctifying their souls. This took place on the tenth day after our Lord's ascension. But, notwithstanding all that he had taught them, they still entertained some thoughts of a temporal kingdom: perhaps they supposed, that the pouring out of the Holy Spirit would induce the nation in general to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah; and that he would then perform what they supposed to be the meaning of the ancient prophets in this respect, (*Marg. Ref.*) Yet they seem to have feared lest the base usage, which he had received from the rulers and people of Israel, should deter him from restoring the kingdom to the nation, as in the days of David and Solomon. Our Lord, however, knew that his ascension, and the descent of the Holy Spirit, would finally terminate these expectations: he therefore checked their

vain curiosity, by observing that it was not proper for them to know these matters, which were entirely at the disposal of God, to be managed and effected by his sovereign power and authority, without the interposition of any creature. But he assured them that they would soon be endued with the Holy Spirit, enabling them to perform many wonderful works; as well as emboldening and strengthening them for their work, and giving them abundant success in it. Thus they would become witnesses of his resurrection, ascension, miracles, and doctrine, in all parts of the earth. The apostles seem to have understood, that they were authorized to preach to the Samaritans, who were circumcised, and observed many parts of the ceremonial law; though in many respects both heretical and schismatical: but they were not aware, till long after, that uncircumcised Gentiles were to be admitted into the kingdom of their Lord, without any regard to the rites of the Mosaic law. But it is not only difficult, but perhaps impossible, to delineate, with any tolerable precision, the state of the apostles' minds at this crisis; in which darkness and light, hopes and fears, carnal and spiritual views and expectations, were blended so intimately, that almighty power alone could separate them. And this was done at once, and effectually, in most things, by the descent of the Holy Spirit: though in a few particulars they were left, for some time, under a degree of error or prejudice. The change wrought in the minds and hearts of the apostles, on the day of Pentecost, was as truly miraculous as the gift of tongues. They were no longer the same men; nay, in many respects, men of a widely different spirit and character, possessing an enlargement of mind, and a superiority to carnal prejudices, hopes, and fears, beyond what could have possibly been previously conceived.

V. 9—11. (*Notes, &c. Luke xxiv. 49—53.*) The instructions and promises which have been considered since

x vii. 5—25.
y Pa. xxii. 27
xviii. 3. Jer. li.
10 xlix. 5. Jer.
10 lxi. 19. Jer.
xxi. 19. Matt.
xxi. 14. Rom.
x. 18. xv. 19.
23. Pa. lxxviii. 19.
Mark xvi. 19.
17 Rev. i. 7. John
vi. 62.
Eph. iv. 8—12.
a Ex. xix. 9.
b Dan. vii. 13.
c Luke xxi. 19.
d Rev. i. 7. xxi.
12 xiv. 14.
e 2 Kings ii. 11, 12.
f x. 30. Dan.
xvii. 2. xxviii.
3. Mark xvi. 6.
g Luke xiv. 4.
h John xiv. 12.
i Rev. i. xii. 31.
j Mark xiv. 28.
k Luke xiv. 28.
l Dan. ix. 13, 14.
m Matt. xxiv. 30.
n xxv. 31. Mark
xiii. 26. Luke
x. 42. 27. 1 John
xiv. 3. 1 Thes.
i. 10. iv. 16.
o Rev. i. 7—
10. Rev. i. 7.
p Zech. iv. 6.
q Matt. xxi. 1.
r xxv. 3. xxvi.
50. John xi. 15.

30. Luke xxi. 37. xxiv. 52. —h Luke xxiv. 50. John xi. 15.

1 ix 37-39 xx 8
 Mark xiv. 15.
 Luke xxii 12
 L ii 14. 33 in 1.
 &c ix 13. 19.
 viii 14 25 ix.
 32-41. x. 9. &c
 xii 2. 3. xv 7-
 11 Matt iv 18
 22 x 2-4
 Mark iii 16-
 14 . 37 ix 2
 xiv 33 Luke

13 And when they were come in, they went up into ¹an upper room, where abode both ^hPeter, and James, and John, and Andrew, ¹Philip, and ^mThomas, Bartholomew, and ⁿMatthew, ^oJames the son of ^pAlpheus, and ^qSimon Zelotes, and ^rJudas the brother of James.

vi 14-16. John
i. 40-42. xvi
23-25 xviii. 17.
25-27. xx 15-
24. 1 John 2
John 3 John
Rev. i. &c.

14 These ^s all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, ^twith the women, and ^uMary the mother of Jesus, ^vand with his brethren.

1 John i. 43-46.
vi. 5-7 xii 21.
22 xiv 8, 9
m John xi. 16. xx.
26-29 xxi 2
n Matt. ix 9
Mark ii. 14
Luke v 27-29
Lxxv
xii 17. gr 12

15 ¶ And in those days ^y Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of ^z the names together were about ^a an hundred and twenty,)

1 Cor. xv. 7. Gal.
 Mark i. 18. the
 Mark iii. 18. Th
 xxi. 52. Luke
 xiv. 40-41. xvi
 Matt. xxi. 55
 John xxi. 15-17
 John xiv. 12. 1 C

1. 19 ii 9 Jam 1. — — — — — Mark ii 14, iii 18 — — — — — Matt. x 4.
 2. Canna'ni. — — — — — r Matt x 3 *Lebbus whose surname was Thaddus.*
 3. addus Jude 1. — — — — — ii 1. 42 46 iv 24-31 vi 4 Matt xviii 19, 20.
 4. xi 13 xviii v 1 xxi 51. Eph. vi 19 — — — — — Matt xxvii 55, 56 Mark
 5. 1 Luke xii 1. 2, 3 xxiv 10 John xxi 25. — — — — — u John xxi 25, 26
 6. 56 Mark xxi 1. 31-35. — — — — — y Ps. xxxiii 5. 6 li 9-13. Luke xxi 32.
 7. — — — — — z Rev. iii 4. xi 13 *Gr.* — — — — — a xxi 20 *Gr.* Matt. xii 31, 32
 8. Cor. xv 6.

16 ^b Men *and* brethren, ^c This scripture must needs have been fulfilled, ^d which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David ^e spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

17 For ^t he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of ^s this ministry.

18 Now ^h this man purchased a field ⁱ with the reward of iniquity; ^k and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem: insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, ^mAceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

xxvi. 15. 2 Pet ii. 15, 16. ——— k Ps lv. 15. 23 Matt. xxvii 5. —
xxviii. 15. ——— m 2 Sam. ii. 16. *Marg.*

to have been delivered, as our Lord was leading the disciples forth to that part of the mount of Olives, from whence he ascended: after which he was gradually raised from the earth in their sight, till a cloud intercepted their view of him. And whilst they looked earnestly after him, with mixed astonishment, regret, and exultation, two angels, in the form of men, accosted them, demanding why they gazed after their ascended Lord, as if they either desired his present return, or counted him lost to them? For though he was now ascended to his glorious throne in heaven, to return no more to reside on earth in his former condition, yet he would assuredly come at length in a visible manner, in the clouds of heaven, to judge the world, and to gather to himself all his believing people, as he had often promised them. Upon this they returned to Jerusalem from mount Olivet. The place from which Jesus ascended was about a mile distant from Jerusalem: this was called a sabbath-day's journey; probably because it might generally be necessary to go so far on that day, in order to attend the service of the synagogue.

V. 13, 14. It cannot be supposed, that this "upper room" should have been one of the chambers of the temple, as some learned men have thought. "These chambers were all appointed for sacred things or persons: how improbable therefore is it, that poor fishermen, and Galileans, odious for their master's sake, should be permitted to crowd, in such numbers, into one of these rooms!" (*Whitby.*) The circumstance mentioned in St. Luke's Gospel, of the disciples being "continually in the temple," only shows, that they resorted from their lodgings, or place of assembling, to the temple, at proper hours, (iii. 1.) Some have conjectured, that the company met in the house of Mary, mother to John Mark. (xii. 12:) but even this, though more probable, is uncertain. "The assemblies of the church, to hear the word, and to join in common prayers, were first instituted and celebrated, by apostolical authority, in a private house." *Continued*, &c. "The word signifies to go on in performing, or enduring, any thing courageously, and with a certain invincible hardi-

'ness and resolution of mind.' (*Beza*.) 'The brethren, or kinsmen, of our Lord, seem to have been the same who formerly did not believe in him. (*Marg. Ref.*) This is the last time, in which Mary, the mother of Jesus, is mentioned in scripture; and it is in a very cursory manner, as one of the company who joined in prayer; but without any peculiar distinction, or the least appearance of her exercising authority over, or even of giving counsel to, the apostles.

V. 15. The whole number of disciples, collected together at this time, was about one hundred and twenty, (for *names* signifies *persons*.) (*Marg. Ref.*) The seventy disciples probably were a part of them: but most of the five hundred brethren, who saw Jesus in Galilee before his ascension, had stayed behind; and doubtless many others believed in him in different parts of the land.

V. 16.—18. Whilst the disciples were continually uniting together in prayer and supplication, it occurred to Peter, to propose the appointment of another apostle, to complete the original number, in the place of the traitor Judas. Peter's guilt in denying his Lord had been so great, as at first sight to appear almost like that of Judas; it is therefore most reasonable to suppose, that he was directed by a divine admonition to take the lead on this occasion: and the whole showed how fully all concerned were satisfied that he was sincerely and deeply penitent. In his address he called the disciples "Men and brethren." Our Lord never thus addressed the people; perhaps it implied an equality, not suitable to the dignity of his character: but the apostles frequently did, in speaking to *Jesus* as well as *Christians*; but never in addressing the Gentiles; and it seems to imply, that they recognized a two-fold relation to them, as men of the same nature, descended from Adam, and as brethren of the same favoured family, as descended from Abraham. Peter reminded the disciples, that the words of the Holy Spirit speaking by David, concerning Judas, when he prophesied of Christ, or spake as a type of him, had been exactly fulfilled. (*Notes*, Ps. xli. lxxix. cix.) Judas had indeed been numbered with them as an

xxiii 33. Luke
xxiv 42. xxv 1
o Pa (xix 25) xix
p 15. Zach v
3. 4.
p 25. Ps cix v
o. *offic.*, or,
charac.
q Luke x. 1, 2

2 Num xxvii 17
Dont. xxvii 2
2 Sam. v. 2
1 King. iii. 7
John 8. 1-9
xxvii 1, 2, 3 Mt
i. Mark 1. 1
Luke iii. 1-10
John 12-21
1. *See* on 2. 9
p. 3. *See* on 2. 9
p. 3. *See* on 2. 9
p. 3. *See* on 2. 9

20 For it is written ^a in the book of Psalms, ^b Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and, ^c His ^d bishopric let another take.

21 Wherefore, of ^a these men which have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus ^b went in and out among us,

22 Beginning ^a from the baptism of John, ^b unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be ^c a witness with us of his resurrection.

23 And they appointed two, Joseph

called ^a Barsabas, who was surnamed, Justus, and Matthias.

24 And ^a they prayed, and said, ^b Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

25 That ^a he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, ^b from which Judas, ^c by transgression fell, that he might ^d go to his own place.

26 And ^a they gave forth their lots: and the lot fell upon ^b Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

John vi 70, 71. xiii 27. xvii 12 — e xiii 19. Lev. xvi 8. Josh. xviii. 10. 1 Sam. xiv. 41, 42. 1 Chr. xxiv. 5. Prov. xvi 33. Jon. i 7 — f 23

xv. 22
y xii 23 Prov.
ii. 5, 6 Luke
vi. 12, 13
xxv 8 Num.
xxvii 16. 1 Sam.
xvi. 7. 1 King.
viii 39. 1 Chr.
xxvii 9. xxix.
17. Ps. vii. 9.
xiv 21 Prov.
xv. 11 Jer. xi.
20 xvii 10 xx.
12. John ii. 24.
25 xxi 17. Heb.
19. Rev. ii.
23.
a 17. 20
b 16-21. Ps. cix.
7. Matt. xxvii.
3-5
c 1 Chr. x. 13, 14.
2. 2 Pet. i 3-6.
July 6, 7.
d Matt. xxv. 47.
46. xxvii. 24.
10. 1 Sam. xiv.
41, 42. 1 Chr. xxiv. 5. Prov. xvi 33. Jon. i 7 — f 23

apostle; yet he had deserved his doom by his treachery and base behaviour, in conducting those who came to apprehend his Lord: but all that he got as the wages of his iniquity, being restored by him to the chief-priests, had merely served to purchase a field, (which in some sense he might be said to have purchased, as he supplied the money which paid for it;) and then in despair hanging himself, (perhaps in this very field,) by some accident he fell down and burst asunder; so that he became a horrid spectacle to the beholders, by the righteous judgment of God upon him.

V. 19. This verse seems to come in as a parenthesis, and to be the words, not of the apostle, but the historian, who informed his readers, that this event became generally known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and the field which had been bought with the price of the blood of Jesus, and which cost Judas his life also, was commonly called “the field of blood,” at the time when the history was written. It is remarkable, that he does not say, in *our*, but *their*, proper tongue, and this, I think, shows that the writer was not a Hebrew, but either a Hellenist, or a Gentile. Some think that Judas also was buried in this field; if so, he bought a burying place among strangers for himself with the wages of his iniquity. (*Notes, &c. Matt. xxvii. 3-10.*)

V. 20-22. The apostle proceeded to observe, that as the scriptures had been fulfilled in the doom of Judas, so the same scriptures pointed out to them what their present conduct ought to be; for as it was predicted that his habitation should be desolate, so it was directed, that another should take his important office and charge. It behooved them, therefore, to take one of their company, who had attended on Jesus with them, from the very beginning of his ministry to his ascension into heaven; that he might be solemnly set apart, to be, with them, a witness of his resurrection, as well as to perform other parts of the apostolical office.

V. 23-26. As the other apostles and disciples perceived the propriety of Peter's counsel, they proceeded to select two persons, according to the best of their judgment, for this important service; probably they had both been of the number of the seventy disciples, and were eminent for wisdom and integrity. But, being unable to decide which of them was the most fit for the charge, they referred the matter by prayer, and by casting lots, to

the Lord's determination. As Jesus had personally appointed the other apostles, many expositors have argued that this prayer was immediately addressed to him: and the language favours the supposition. They, however, appealed to the Searcher of all hearts, to determine whether of the two he had chosen to take part of the authority, trust, and labour of the apostleship, from which Judas had fallen by his atrocious crime, to go to that dreadful place of punishment, to which he was righteously condemned. In answer to this appeal, the Lord was pleased to direct the lot to fall upon Matthias; whom some suppose to have been the same with Nathanael, because both their names signify “the gift of God:” but this is very uncertain. It is remarkable, that Matthias is never mentioned in scripture, except on this occasion, but Barsabas is. (*Marg. Ref.*) Yet, no doubt, the Lord had wise and holy reasons for choosing Matthias, though they are wholly unknown to us. The prayer offered on this occasion was vastly unlike what might have been expected from deceivers. It is dictated by a deep sense of the Lord's perfect acquaintance with all hearts, the importance of the cause in which they were engaged, and their incompetency to decide in it without divine direction. The whole account, when compared with the surprising blindness of the disciples to the true meaning of the prophecies, before the resurrection of Christ, illustrates the evangelist's words, “Then opened he their understandings, to understand the Scripture:” for there is a constant recurrence to the sacred oracles, and a clear and sound interpretation of the passages adduced. It is wonderful, that any persons should have referred to this narrative, in the argument concerning the choice of ministers, when the case was so evidently extraordinary, and one that could never again occur; and when the eleven apostles, with a number of the seventy disciples, probably formed the far greater part of the company present.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-11.



Whilst we thankfully peruse the instructive narrative “of all that Jesus began both to do, and to teach;” let us remember that all instruction should be reduced to practice; and that ministers should begin *to do*, and then

CHAP. II.

The day of Pentecost being come, the Holy Spirit is poured out on the assembled disciples, with the sound as of a mighty wind; while cloven tongues as of fire rest on each of them, 1—3. They speak divers languages, in the hearing of multitudes, from many nations, who come together on the occasion; at which most were amazed, but some derided, 4—13. Peter shows, that this was the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy, 14—21: that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was risen from the dead, according to the prophecy of David, 21—32;

and being ascended into heaven, he had poured out the Holy Spirit, to prove beyond all doubt, that he was the promised Messiah, 33—36. They are pricked to the heart, and inquire what they must do, 37. Peter exhorts and encourages them to repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus, 38—40. Three thousand are added to the church, 41. They continue steadfast in the faith, 42. Many miracles are wrought by the apostles, 43. The disciples have all things in common, and abound in love, joy, and praise; while numbers are daily added to them, 44—47.

to teach, that their example may illustrate, confirm, and adorn their doctrine. For these ends we need a daily supply of that Spirit, by which Jesus gave commandment to his apostles; that we may be convinced effectually of those truths, which, though authenticated by infallible proofs, are never cordially believed, till his teaching removes the veil of pride and worldly lusts from the understanding and the heart. Then, and not before, we learn to profit by what Jesus hath spoken, concerning the kingdom of God; and are induced to seek its privileges, and to obey its commandments. We should therefore wait for this promise of the Father, according to the directions which our Lord hath given us; for, though we are not to expect the miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit, yet we must experience his purifying baptism, or we never can serve God, or be made meet for the inheritance of heaven. In proportion as this is wanting, (for it is communicated in different degrees,) even true believers remain under the influence of carnal prejudices, and cleave to earthly things; by which they are kept in error, or betrayed into curious questions and frivolous speculations. But it behooves us to leave secret things to the Lord, to whom they belong; and to submit to his wisdom, in all the dispensations of his providence and grace. It is enough, that he hath engaged to give his people strength adequate to their trials and services; that, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, they may, in one way or other, be witnesses for Christ on earth; whilst in heaven he manages their concerns with the most perfect wisdom, truth, and love. In our affections and hopes we ought to follow our ascended Saviour, that our conversation and our hearts may be in heaven; and that our expectation of his second coming may be steadfast and joyful, by “giving diligence to be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”

V. 12—26.

In order to serve the cause of Christ on earth, we should study to be of one heart with all his true disciples, that by mutual conference we may encourage and animate each other, and that our united prayers may be more fervent and uninterrupted. Thus we may have peace, in communion with God and his saints, notwithstanding the

enmity and rage of an ungodly world. As the Church of Christ at first consisted of but few persons, so we ought not to despise the day of small things. A little company, united in love, exemplary in their conduct, fervent in prayer, and prudently zealous in promoting the cause of Christ by every means in their power, will generally increase with rapidity. We should all carefully observe the dispensations of providence, and compare them with the holy Scriptures, not only for the confirmation of our faith, but in order to learn our duty; and we ought to point out to our brethren those intimations which are thus suggested to us, that we may unite our endeavours to do good, as circumstances may require and occasions may offer. The crimes and awful fate of some professed ministers, who have been high in rank and reputation in the Church, should by no means lead men to despise that sacred calling; but such instances loudly require others to look to themselves, to their motives and intentions, as well as to their doctrine and moral conduct. The nearer men approach to Jesus in profession and office, the more detestable is their treachery, if they secretly confer with his enemies, and betray his cause to them. The gain of hypocrites is the reward of iniquity; and it will only purchase for them an Aceldama, a field of blood, a more awful condemnation and more notorious infamy; for, (if they die impenitent, and it is highly probable they will,) in what way soever they leave the world, and whether their habitations be left desolate or flourishing, they must follow Judas to *their own place*, even that prepared for the workers of iniquity. But when mercenary and ungodly men are removed, we should beseech the great Searcher of hearts to fill their places in the Church with such ministers as have known Christ, and are capable of being witnesses for him, and of declaring to others the efficacy of his sufferings, and the power of his resurrection. They, who are intrusted in this matter, should be careful to “lay hands suddenly on no man;” but whilst they do their best, to select the most able and upright persons for this sacred service, they ought to pour out their most earnest prayers to him, “who knoweth what is in man,” to direct their choice, and to determine for them, who are, and who are not, proper persons. Where this is omitted, and when it degenerates into a form, we need not wonder to see the Church crowded

cause it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

25 For ^a David speaketh concerning him, ^b I foresaw the Lord always before my face; ^c for he is on my right hand that ^d I should not be moved:

26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad: moreover also, my flesh shall rest in hope;

27 Because thou wilt not ^e leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer ^f thine holy One ^g to see corruption.

28 Thou hast ^a made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt ^b make me full of joy with thy countenance.

V. 22—24. The apostle next called the attention of his audience more immediately to the grand subject of his discourse. They had heard or known much concerning Jesus, who had been despised as a Nazarene: yet it was evident, that he was *at least* a man whom God had greatly owned and approved, as appeared from the various, multiplied, and incontestible miracles which were wrought by him among them, in the most public manner, as they well knew. Yet, instead of receiving him as the Son of God and the Messiah, their rulers had taken him up and condemned him as a malefactor; and so had crucified him by the wicked hands of the idolatrous Romans: and as the multitude of the nation had preferred Barabbas to him, and clamorously demanded his crucifixion, so this most atrocious murder was become their own act and deed, as much as if they had performed it with their own hands. Indeed all this had been done, according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, who had decreed this great event for the most wise, righteous, and merciful purposes, and had also predicted it many ages before: yet that was in no degree an excuse for, or extenuation of, *their* guilt, who were influenced by the basest motives in what they did. But though they had murdered their Messiah, as if he had been a deceiver, yet God had abundantly vindicated his character and claim, as the promised Messiah; having raised him up, (*John* ii. 19.) and liberated him from the *bonds* of death, or from those bonds, in which the pains and agonies of his cruel execution had terminated; by which indeed it was impossible that he should have been long confined, whether the dignity of his Person, the nature of his undertaking, the perfection of his work, the purpose of God, or the predictions of Scripture, were considered. *Delivered by, &c.* 'Him, being permitted by God to fall into your hand, God having withdrawn that protection which was necessary to have preserved him from them; (and thus by his decree, that he should lay down his life for his sheep, in order to that great design of man's salvation, toward which he did by his foreknowledge discern the fittest expedient;) ye apprehended and crucified most wickedly.' (*Hammond.*)—'It only doth suppose, that God can foresee and foretell what man, not hindered by him, but left to his own inclinations, will do. And if that foresight hath any influence

29 Men and brethren, * let me ^e freely speak unto you of ^a the patriarch ^c David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

30 Therefore ^f being a prophet, ^g and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, ^h he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne:

31 He seeing this before, ⁱ spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

32 This Jesus hath God raised up, ^k whereof we all are witnesses.

'on the will, to make the action necessary, then all our actions must be necessary.' (*Whitby.*) Did this learned writer suppose, that, according to the doctrine of Calvinists, the foresight, or even the decree, of God has any influence on the will? If either he, or others who have brought the same objections, suppose this, they are very blameably ignorant of the doctrine which they would confute. 'God foresees and foretells what man, left to his inclinations, will do;' and God determines to leave him to his inclinations. This permission is enough in such a case; but to determine, by preventing grace, to make the sinner willing to submit, believe, and obey, requires a *positive interposition of divine and non-creating power*, which none deserves, or, left entirely to himself, desires, and which God bestows or withholds, "according to the counsel of his own will." Again, such texts constrain both the above cited learned writers to allow, that the event was certainly foreseen, and could not but take place; though the persons concerned were under no coercion, and acted according to the lusts of their own hearts. But did God certainly foresee this, as his own all-wise determination and decree, or as something independent on his decree, which could neither be altered or prevented? (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 25—32. David in particular spake expressly of the Messiah in a passage with which the Jews were well acquainted, and which has already been explained. (*Note, Ps. xvi. 8—11.*) This would be evident, if they would permit him to speak freely of David, who was one of the venerable patriarchs of their nation, being the progenitor of that numerous and honourable family, from whom the Messiah was to descend: for it was evident that David died, was buried, and saw corruption, like other men; and his sepulchre had been preserved, by frequent repairs, even to that day, in honour of his memory. It therefore followed, beyond all controversy, that he spake not of himself in the passage that had been cited; but, being a prophet, and knowing that the Messiah would descend from him, in respect of his human nature, to reign upon his throne over the people of God for ever; in the prospect of these events, he spake of the resurrection of the Messiah, who was indeed to be put to death, but whose soul would not be left in the place of separate spirits, nor would his body be suffered to lie in the grave till it began in the lease

33 Therefore being ¹ by the right hand of God exalted, ^m and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, ⁿ he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

31 For David is not ascended into the heavens: ^o but he saith himself, ^p The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

35 Until I make ^q thy foes thy footstool.

36 Therefore let ^r all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

37 ¶ Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and

said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, ^t Men and brethren, ^u what shall we do?

38 Then Peter said unto them, ^v Repent, and ^w be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, ^x and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For ^y the promise is unto you, and to your children, ^z and to all that are afar off, ^{aa} even ^{ab} as many as the Lord our God shall call.

40 And ^c with many other words ^d he testified and exhorted, saying, Save ^e yourselves from this ^f untoward generation.

to corrupt. (*Marg. Ref.*) In accomplishment of this prophecy God had actually raised up Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified, but who was indeed the promised Messiah, of the family of David, and born at Bethlehem. This event had taken place on the third day of his death, before the body had begun "to see corruption," (*Lev. vii. 17*;) of this the twelve apostles and all the company present were competent witnesses, as they had seen and conversed with him repeatedly after his resurrection.

V. 33—36. The resurrection of Jesus did not, however, rest solely on the testimony of the apostles; for, having ascended from among them, he had been exalted by the power of God, at his right hand, to the highest possible dignity and authority in heaven; and having received of God the Father, the Holy Spirit, according to the promises of the Scripture to the Messiah, (*Marg. Ref.*) he had poured out upon his disciples all those miraculous gifts and divine influences, the effects of which were witnessed at that time, and which could not possibly be accounted for in any other manner. For David had not arisen from the dead to ascend into heaven, according to the meaning of the Psalm before cited; but in another place, calling the promised Messiah his Lord, though he was to be his Son, (*Notes, &c. Ps. cx. 1. Matt. xxii. 41—46*;) he had predicted his ascension into heaven, and his exaltation to the right hand of God; there to be established in supreme authority, till he had subjected all his enemies, and rendered their opposition to him an accession to his own glory. As therefore the events which the apostles testified, and to which the Holy Spirit given to them bare witness also, accorded so exactly to their ancient prophecies, the whole house of Israel might be assured, by the most complete demonstration imaginable, that God had constituted Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had contemptuously crucified, the Lord and Judge of all worlds, and the anointed Prophet, Priest, and King of his chosen people; so that he was actually possessed of complete authority, both to save and bless those who trusted in and obeyed him, and also to crush all that obstinately refused to submit to him. The

scope of Peter's argument was to show that the crucified Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah, and that he was actually risen, ascended, and glorified. When the Jews were convinced of this, and were induced to believe on him in that character, they would readily learn from Scripture, and from further instructions, the spiritual nature of his kingdom and salvation, the intent of his sufferings and death, and the various doctrines of his religion.

V. 37—40. The apostle's arguments were indeed absolutely conclusive, and his application highly interesting, though in other respects his discourse was peculiarly plain and simple. But when we consider the complicated evidence of our Lord's doctrine and miracles, and the obstinate unbelief of the Jews, we shall perceive, that neither Peter's words, nor yet the miracles which they witnessed, would have produced such effects as followed, had not the Holy Spirit been also communicated to the audience, to remove the veil of pride, prejudice, and sinful affections from their minds. "The Comforter being come, he convinced them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment;" (*Note, John xvi. 8—11*.) The apostle's words, therefore, attended by His powerful influences, penetrated their hearts like arrows, or as a sharp sword; and, being filled with terror on account of their enormous guilt, in rejecting and crucifying the Lord of glory, they cried out to the apostles in deep distress, as to their friends and countrymen, inquiring, with great earnestness, What they must do? Was there any hope for them of escaping the vengeance of their exalted Messiah, whom they had so deeply injured? If there were, by what means could it be done? To this the apostle replied, by exhorting them to repent of that and all their other sins, (*Note, Matt. iii. 2*;) and openly to avow their firm belief that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, by being baptized in his name. (*Note, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20*.) In thus professing their faith in him, all who truly believed would receive a full remission of their sins for his sake, as well as a participation of the graces of the Holy Spirit; many of them likewise of those miraculous powers, which they saw bestowed upon his disciples. For the promise

137. viii. 6-8.
xiii. 48 xvi. 31
— 33. Matt. xii.
41-46. Gal. iv.
14. 1b. 1 Thea.
4. 6.
K. Ste om. 39.

147. i. 15. iv. 4
Ps. lxxiii. 16, 17.
— 148. Luke v.
5-7. John x. v.
12.

148. xi. 21. cxx.
— 149. Mark iv. 16;
17. John vii. 51.
— 150. Gal. i. 6.
Eph. ii. 20. Col.
4. 23. 2 Tim. iii.
11. Heb. x. 39.
2 Pet. iii. 1, 2.
17. 1b. 1 John
ii. 19.

151. 23. v. 12-14.
John i. 3. 7.
xx. 7. 11. 1 Cor. x.
16. 17. 21. xi. 20-26.
— q. v. 11. 13. Eph. viii.
17. Jer. xxiii. 9. Hos. iii.
5. Luke vi. 16. vii. 37.
— r. iii. 6-9. v. 23. s.
12. 15. 16. ix. 24. 40. Mark xvi.
17. John xiv. 12. — s. iv. 32. v.
4. vi. 1-3. 3 Cor. viii. 9. 14. 15. ix. 6. 1. 1 John iii. 16-18.

(either the general promise respecting the Messiah, and the blessings of his kingdom, as made to Abraham their father, or the particular promise of the Spirit quoted from Joel,) was made, or proposed to them and to their children; and not to those present only, but to all, however dispersed, whom God should call by his Gospel. Peter's words, as suggested by the Holy Spirit, implied the calling of the Gentiles also; yet he could not himself understand them in that sense. The promise, as made to Abraham, included also his posterity; and that of the new covenant did the same to those who should be interested in it, (*Marg. Ref.*) and the language here accords with it: the male descendants of Abraham were circumcised, as included in the promise, and as a part of the visible Church; and this passage may intimate that the infant offspring of Christians, being also included in the promise, and in the covenant of their parents, and being a part of the visible Church, should be admitted to baptism, which is the outward sign of the same spiritual blessings, as circumcision was. (*Notes, &c. Gen. xvii.*) Besides this general address, Peter bare witness to the truth, and in the name of God charged his audience with many other words, the substance of which was, that they should embrace the Gospel, without waiting for the concurrence of their rulers and teachers; and, by thus entering into the Church and kingdom of Christ, should save themselves from that destruction, which impended over that perverse and rebellious generation of Israel, for obstinately rejecting the promised Messiah; as well as that they should flee for refuge to Jesus, from the wrath to come.

V. 41. The apostle had exhorted *every one* of them to be baptized, and they that gladly received the word were baptized: as therefore it is most improbable that there should have been none of John's disciples in this large company, so we may fairly infer that Christ's baptism was not precisely the same institution with John's; and that from this time *at least*, John's disciples were baptized, when they were admitted into the Christian Church, according to the form appointed by our Lord after his resurrection. Though Peter exhorted the Jews to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, as professing their faith in him, the Messiah; yet there is no reason to doubt that they were baptized, "in," or "into, the name of the "Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," as had been prescribed. As so great a number was at once bap-

45 And ^t sold their possessions and goods, ^u and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

46 And they, continuing ^x daily with one accord in the temple, ^y and breaking bread ^z from house to house, ^z did eat their meat with gladness and ^a singleness of heart;

47 Praising ^b God, and having favour with all the people. And ^c the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

138. 36-37 v. 1.
2. xi. 19. Luke
xii. 33, 34. xvi.
9. xviii. 22. xix.
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u. 1b. xlii. 9. Prov.
xii. 24. 25. xix.
17. Ec. xi. 1, 2.
13. 14. 15. 7-12.
1 Tim. vii. 1-12.
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CHAP. III.

*Peter and John, at the temple, heal one who had been lame from his birth, 1—3.
The people, being astonished, through*

amazed them, 9—11. Peter declares that this miracle had been wrought by the power, and through faith in the name, of Jesus, whom they had delivered to be crucified, but whom God had raised

preaching desolations of Jerusalem and Judea, might concur in influencing them to sell their estates and possessions, that they might impart to every one of the company as each had need. This was peculiarly suitable to the state of the Church at that time, and the same disposition ought always to prevail; yet it is evident that the same way of expressing it is not required, nor would it be in general expedient. The minds of the new converts were occupied almost entirely with these important concerns; and as many of them were far from home, and probably had not many secular affairs to attend on, so they daily continued, in the most harmonious manner, to meet together in the courts of the temple, for the worship of God, and in the houses of believers, one after another, as they had opportunity; where they hospitably entertained each other, as well as joined in sacred ordinances. Thus their very meals were sanctified, as they used the good gifts of God with cheerful gratitude, and in a simple dependence on him, and desire to please him. They were also frequently employed in celebrating the praises of God, and blessing him for all his unspeakable benefits; so that even the Jews, who did not join them, held them in great estimation, and showed great favour to them. What a lovely exhibition of the effects of genuine Christianity, when applied and blessed by the Spirit of God! What excellent and what happy characters does it form! Thus the Lord, from day to day, inclined the hearts of more and more to embrace the Gospel, and join themselves to the disciples of Jesus; and they did not merely profess to be disciples, but were *saved persons*, or actually brought into a state of acceptance with God, as penitent believers in Christ.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—13.

Seeming delays to the performance of God's promises, till the appointed time is fully come, are peculiarly advantageous to those who wait on him in patient faith and fervent prayer. When a company of believers are of one heart, thus to seek and hope for the pouring out of his Holy Spirit, a revival of true religion may reasonably be expected; for the promise stands sure, that "our heavenly Father will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him." —We cannot explain the manner of his operation, but we may perceive that with invincible power he bears down all the opposition of pride and worldly prejudices as with a rushing mighty wind, and changes the heart like a vehement fire. Sound judgment, heavenly wisdom and knowledge, fervent affections, holy boldness, and a ready utterance in the things of God, are his gifts to those whom he qualifies for the sacred ministry, or to serve the Church of Christ in any important public situation, for which all may depend on him, according to their need; and though we do not expect such miraculous powers as were communicated to the apostles on the day of Pentecost, yet

we share the benefit of them, both in the demonstrative evidence thus given to the truth of the Gospel, and in the infallible declaration which they have authenticated and transmitted to us, concerning the way in which we may be saved. The remarkable pouring out of the Spirit, even in his ordinary influences and operations, will always produce a measure of the same effects as this extraordinary communication did. It will soon be noised abroad; many will be excited to examine into it, and to make their observations; some will be astonished at the change wrought in, and the things spoken by, such persons, as were before known to be careless, ignorant, or illiterate; and they will be led to acknowledge that there is something real and wonderful in it; others will stand in doubt, and not know what to determine about it; nay, some more ignorant, self-important, malignant, and daring, will, without hesitation or competent information, even pronounce it all enthusiasm, delusion, hypocrisy, imposture, or perhaps intoxication, and so treat it with scorn and derision! But "wisdom is justified by all her children!"

V. 14—21.

If we are indeed influenced by the Spirit of truth, holiness and love, we shall meekly bear, or reply to, the most injurious reflections, assigning the cause of those effects which produce such different opinions. Thus, even curiosity and malicious reproaches, will give the ministers of Christ an opportunity of bearing testimony to the truth, before those who have been strangers and enemies to it. On such occasions, it is peculiarly important for us to show the agreement of our sentiments, affections and behaviour, with the doctrines, promises, predictions, examples and precepts of Scripture; solidly arguing from it as undoubted truth, and applying every subject as cogently as possible to the hearts and consciences of our hearers. To suppose, however, that, now Christianity is publicly professed amongst us, and we have no longer need of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, we therefore do not want his sanctifying operations, is as unreasonable as it would be to argue, from the present improved state of agriculture, that the influences of the sun and rain are become unnecessary; and the state of those congregations, where such notions are maintained, too plainly show their real tendency. If Peter and Paul should come again on earth to preach the Gospel, and to confirm their doctrine with the most undeniable miracles, no saving effects would follow, except the Holy Spirit were given, to render the word successful. But indeed the whole Gospel will seldom, if ever, be faithfully preached with earnest and faithful application to the heart and conscience, save when the minister is in some measure enabled to speak as "the Spirit gives him utterance." Even Peter and the other apostles were manifestly raised above themselves, when thus filled by the Holy Ghost; and their

from the dead, 12—16; he supposes, that they did it ignorantly, and shows that God had thus fulfilled the scriptures, 17, 18: exhorts them to repent and be converted, that their sins might be pardoned, and they

made partakers of the promised blessing, 19, 20; and refers them to Moses and all the prophets, whose predictions were fulfilled in Jesus the Saviour, 21—26.

singular boldness and liberty, in speaking of the wonderful works of God, as evidently proved that they were supernaturally aided, as the new tongues with which they spoke. (Note, Mark xvi. 17.) Such assistance we may expect, and shall experience, from time to time, when called to bear witness to "the truth as it is in Jesus." It should also be noticed, as the evident doctrine of the sacred oracles, that when God remarkably pours out his Spirit, in abundance of spiritual gifts and graces, on numbers of every rank and station, so as to effect a great revival of true religion in any place, it may also be expected, that he will remarkably punish those who persist in neglecting and despising his great salvation. Assuredly, at that solemn period which is so often foretold and prefigured in Scripture, when the sun shall literally be turned into darkness, and the whole visible creation be destroyed by one common conflagration, to introduce "the great and notable day" of "judgment, and perdition of ungodly men," none will escape that dreadful condemnation, and the subsequent vengeance, except those who have previously called upon the name of the Lord, in and through his Son Jesus Christ, as the only Saviour of sinners and the Judge of mankind. But on the other hand, whosoever, of any age, nation, rank, or character, now calls on the name of the Lord, in this appointed manner, shall then be completely saved, and made an heir of eternal life.

V. 22—36.

The enmity of the human heart against God, appears especially in scornful enmity generally manifested against those whom he hath most evidently owned and approved: the doctrine, miracles, character, and crucifixion of Jesus, form the chief proof of this; but instances to the same effect have been multiplied in every age. The "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" cannot induce men to any of their voluntary actions, being wholly unknown by them, or unthought of at the time; and therefore can form no excuse for their sins. In permitting ungodly men to follow the bent of their own inclinations, he brings to pass those events which he hath purposed and predicted; but his decrees, and their accomplishment, are most holy, wise, righteous, and good; whereas the instruments by which he works, are actuated by the basest motives, and aim at the gratification of their vilest passions. This was most evident in the crucifixion of Christ, which, as appointed of God, was the most glorious display of all the divine perfections, and replete with the richest blessings to mankind; but, as perpetrated by the Jews, it was the grand discovery of human depravity, and, in all its circumstances, the greatest single act of wickedness, that ever was or can be committed. Such men aim to counteract the purposes of God, at the very time when they are accomplishing them; and when he has wrought by them as long as he sees good, he turns his hand against

them to their destruction. As it was not possible, that the Redeemer should be held under the power of death, though he endured the pain of it, so it cannot be, that the Scripture should be broken, or that his believing people should come short of that blessed resurrection, of which he was the glorious First-fruits. After his example, they are taught to set God always before them, to walk as in his presence in humble obedience, and in confidence that they shall not be moved. In proportion to the degree of their faith and hope, their hearts rejoice, and dictate praises to their tongues. They, too, learn to meet death with a comfortable hope, that though their flesh see corruption in the grave, yet it shall not finally be left there, and that their souls shall never experience the miseries of the place of torment. Through their crucified, risen, and ascended Saviour, the ways of life are made known to them also; and from present earnestness they are encouraged to expect that they shall be filled with the joy of God's presence and favour for evermore. But all this springs from their assured belief, grounded on prophecies, miracles, and abundant external and internal proofs, that Jesus is indeed ascended into the heavens. Pious kings, patriarchs, and prophets of old, looked forward to these events with joyful expectation; and died, assuredly believing that the Redeemer would appear, to overcome death, and to open the gates of heaven to all that trusted in him. An innumerable company of witnesses testify that the crucified Jesus was he; and that, being risen from the dead, he is exalted by the hand of the Father, to communicate all blessings to his people, and to put all his enemies under his feet. Therefore let all men know assuredly, that Jesus is the Lord and Judge of the whole world, and the anointed Saviour of all who obey him.

V. 37—41.

When the solemn truths of Scripture are declared, with plain and direct application to the conscience, attended by the influence of the convincing Spirit, the proud, stout, and hard heart begins to tremble and be disquieted: nor will the salvation and kingdom of the Prince of peace ever be welcome to those who never were pricked to the heart by humiliating and alarming convictions of sin, so as to be excited to earnest inquiries, "What they must do?" But the most desperate enemies, when thus awakened, should be exhorted to repent, and believe in Jesus, and to prove and profess their faith, in the way prescribed by his holy word. Still repentance and remission of sins are preached to the chief of sinners, in the Redeemer's name; still the Holy Spirit seals the blessing on the believer's heart; still the encouraging promises are to us, and to our children. (who possess manifold advantages and opportunities, through the faith and obedience of their parents;) still the same blessings are sent to "all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." We should therefore embrace this salvation ourselves; and

NOW ^a Peter and John ^b went up together into the temple, at ^c the hour of prayer, *being the ninth hour.*

2 And a certain man, ^d lame from his mother's womb, was carried, ^e whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple ^f which is called Beautiful, ^g to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked an alms.

4 And Peter, ^h fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, ⁱ Look on us.

5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

6 Then Peter said, ^j Silver and gold have I none; ^k but such as I have, give I thee: ^l In the name of ^m Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.

ⁿ Matt. vii. 22. Mark xvi. 17. — ^o ii. 22. 38. iv. 10. x. 38. John xix. 19.

7 And ^p he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up; and immediately his feet and ankle-bones received strength.

8 And ^q he, leaping up, stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping, ^r and praising God.

9 And all ^s the people saw him walking, and praising God.

10 And ^t they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: ^u and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

11 And, as the lame man which was healed, ^v held Peter and John, ^w all the people ran together unto them ^x in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

then, as we have opportunity, we should testify, warn, exhort, invite, and persuade sinners to save themselves from the perverse generation of those who reject the Gospel; and if our nearest relatives refuse to go with us in the way to heaven, or would hinder us from going, we must stop our ears to their blandishments, persuasions, and reproaches, and escape for our lives from the ruin impending over them. Under the influences of the Holy Spirit, convinced sinners gladly receive the word of salvation, and find peace and joy in believing; they boldly profess the truth that before they despised, renouncing worldly interests, pleasures, and companions; and, joining themselves to the Lord and his people, they delight in attending on his ordinances and in keeping his commandments.

V. 42—47.

When shall we behold the whole company of those who have been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, disposed to copy the example of these first-fruits of the Gospel! This specimen of the genuine nature and tendency of Christianity ought carefully to be considered; for unless our views, pursuits, affections, and conduct, in good measure correspond with theirs, we have great reason to question whether we be truly believers. Indeed hasty conversions, from one creed or sect to another, are seldom followed by such a steadfastness in faith and practice, as becomes the Gospel of Christ; yet these things have been, and will again be united; and we must therefore form no general rules without allowing for exceptions. Rather let us study to copy the pattern here exhibited, and pray without ceasing for the pouring out of the Spirit, to produce such blessed effects in us and around us; that we too may continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and in fellowship with all true believers; that our attendance on the Lord's table may be more frequent, serious, and influential, than it generally is at present; that we may abound more in social prayers and supplications for each other, and for

the success of the Gospel; that we may delight daily in attending to the word of God, when we have opportunity, and leisure from other duties; that we may use hospitality without grudging, and communicate liberally to our needy brethren; and that "whether we eat or drink, or what-ever we do, we may do all to the glory of God," in gladness and singleness of heart; at a distance from avarice, selfishness, intemperance, pride, envy, contention, or any of those manifold evils, which corrupt, disgrace, and divide the Church of Christ. Thus we shall over-awe our inveterate enemies, even without the power of working miracles; thus we shall "show forth the praises of" him, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light," silence the slanders, and soften the prejudices of those who are without; and dispose them to favour us, and attend to the doctrine of God our Saviour. And when the most unlikely persons, (such as the crucifiers of the Lord Jesus,) are transformed by the Gospel into such harmless, peaceful, loving, and exemplary worshippers of God, it may be expected, that "the Lord will add" to his Church daily such as shall be saved; and even they, who, like Peter, have been overcome by temptation to act inconsistently with their holy profession, if indeed they are deeply humbled, and made more bold, and zealous for the cause of their gracious Lord, may yet hope to be employed as his instruments in forwarding so blessed a work, for his glory and the salvation of souls. May the Lord then pour out his Holy Spirit on all ministers, Christians, and congregations, for these blessed purposes, till the earth be filled with the knowledge of his glory!

NOTES.

CHAP. III. V. 1—11. The events, recorded in this and the following chapters, seem to have occurred soon after those that have been considered. The apostles and primitive believers, generally attended the worship at the hours of prayer: of which the third and the ninth, or nine o'clock in the morning, and three in the afternoon, when

17 And now, brethren, I ¹ wot that ² ye have done ³ this ⁴ thing ⁵ through ignorance ye did ⁶ it, as ⁷ did also ⁸ your rulers.

18 But ¹ those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of ² all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

19 ¹ Repent ye therefore, and ² be converted, ³ that your sins may be blotted

out; ⁴ when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; ⁵ 20 And ⁶ he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: ⁷ 21 Whom ⁸ the heaven must receive until ⁹ the times of restitution of all things, which God hath ¹⁰ spoken by the mouth of all his ¹¹ holy prophets since the world began.

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22 For ^a Moses truly said unto the fathers, ^b A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you ^c of your brethren, ^d like unto me; ^e him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you.

23 And it shall come to pass, ^f that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

24 Yea, ^g and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as

many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

25 Ye are ^h the children of the prophets, and of ⁱ the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, ^j And in thy Seed shall ^k all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

26 Unto you ^l first, God, ^m having raised up his Son Jesus, ⁿ sent him to bless you, ^o in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

people, in crucifying the Messiah, seemed to fill up the measure of their national guilt, and ripen them for destruction. But as Jesus, after his resurrection, had directed his apostles to "preach repentance and remission of sins" in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem,¹ and as the success of their first attempt had been so signal, and they had hitherto met with no opposition, it seems probable they expected, that Christ would soon "restore the kingdom to Israel," having first brought the nation in general to repent and believe in him; and then, by their means, bring the other nations to embrace the religion of Israel; and so, as proselytes, to seek admission into the kingdom of the Messiah. Then, perhaps, they expected that Jesus would return again from heaven, set up a triumphant kingdom on earth, and, destroying all obstinate enemies, would introduce those glorious days, which all the prophets had foretold. It is undeniable, that the apostles, even long after the day of Pentecost, did not clearly understand many things, relating to the calling of the Gentiles, the rejection of the Jews, and the fulfilment of the prophecies. (ii. 17. 39. x. 12--48. xi. 1--18. xv. *Note*, *Matt.* xxiv. 3.) Their minds were enlightened, and their prejudices dissipated, rapidly indeed, yet gradually, and as their present circumstances and duties required. Thus the ancient prophets were inspired to foretell as much as it was proper should at the time be known; yet they did not immediately, or certainly, know the meaning of their predictions, (1 *Pet.* i. 11, 12; and the apostles and primitive Christians, after the event, understood them more clearly than the prophets themselves had done. In like manner after the conversion of Cornelius, and after the council at Jerusalem, Christians in general would understand St. Peter's words concerning the "pouring out of the Spirit" on all flesh," more distinctly than he did when he uttered them; and after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the abolishing of the Mosaic dispensation, the surviving Christians would more exactly perceive the meaning of the words before us, than Peter himself did at the time. Our Lord had told the apostles, "It was not for them to know the times and the seasons, which the Father had put in his own power;" (i. 7.) and there is ground to believe, that this, in many respects, was not clearly revealed to them, but left to be discovered by the event. Had the nation of Israel, as a body, embraced the Gospel, the times of refreshment would have come from "the presence of the Lord;" and when the nation shall thus turn to their

long-rejected Messiah, those times will come. But the prophets, who foretold them, predicted also a national rejection of the Messiah, and dreadful desolations to the people, with long continued dispensations. It was not, however, necessary, that the Holy Spirit should, on this occasion, make known the times and seasons of these dispensations; and without such an immediate revelation, the apostle might expect that these happy times for his nation were at hand. Even to the end of the New Testament, such an obscurity is left on these subjects, that diverse opinions still prevail, in respect of the reign of Christ during the millennium, whether it is to be *personal*, or *spiritual*; and his coming to set up his kingdom all over the earth is very generally, even by diligent expositors, confounded with his coming to judge the world, and in various other particulars. Now, that which was to be obscurely foretold, a prophet or apostle might but obscurely foresee; and the historian merely records the apostle's discourse.

V. 22--26. (*Note*, &c. *Deut.* xviii. 15--19.) "One cannot imagine a more masterly address than this, to warn the Jews of the dreadful consequence of their infidelity, in the very words of Moses, their favourite prophet; out of a pretended zeal for whom they were ready to reject Christianity, and to attempt its destruction." (*Doddridge*.) Samuel was the first prophet after Moses, who was employed as a writer of the sacred oracles; and from him the schools of the prophets seem to have originated. It is not necessary to prove that predictions concerning Christ are found in the writings of every one of the prophets; for the words imply a general, not an universal, proposition; yet Jonah and Nahum alone appear to be exceptions, for Obadiah certainly is not. The book of Jonah is a history, not a prophecy; and he was a remarkable type of Christ; and that of Nahum is the burden of Nineveh, and relates to no other subject. (*Marg. Ref.*) The persons to whom the apostle spake, were the descendants of those to whom the prophets had been sent, and they had inherited from them the sacred oracles, as well as the advantages of the covenant first made with their fathers; especially that of the Messiah's arising from among them, who was that Seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. Indeed, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were prophets; and the Jews were their children, and heirs of the covenant made with them; unless (like profane Esau,) they should

CHAP. IV.

The priests and Sadducees imprison Peter and John, 1—3. The signal success of their preaching, 4. When they are brought before the council, Peter boldly declares that the late cure had been wrought in the name of Jesus, the only Saviour, whom the rulers had rejected, 5—12. The council, unable to answer, dismiss them with a threatening charge to speak no more in the name of Jesus, which they avowed themselves bound to disregard, 13—22. They return to

their company; and all unite in prayer, for boldness in preaching, and that miracles of mercy might confirm their testimony, 23—30. The house being shaken, they are all filled with the Holy Spirit, and emboldened to speak the word of God, 31. The harmony and charity of the whole company, who had all things in common; the miraculous assistance granted to the apostles; and the pious liberality of such as had possessions, in selling them, to distribute to the needy, 32—37.

despise and refuse their birthright and blessing. Therefore the first proposal of the Gospel was ordered to be made to them. For God, having raised up his Son Jesus, to be a Prophet, Priest, and Ruler, like to Moses, but unspeakably superior, and having raised him from the dead, and placed him upon his glorious throne, had sent him, by his Gospel and by his Holy Spirit, to render them truly happy; not by advancing them to worldly authority and prosperity, as they had vainly expected; but by teaching, encouraging, and enabling them to turn away from all their sins, that they might walk before him as his accepted worshippers and adopted children, in the light of his countenance, and the enjoyment of his favour. (*Marg. Ref.*) The last clause may be rendered "to bless you, in every one turning away from his iniquities." It is almost certain that Christ did not convert all present; much less every one of the nation; but the apostle might hope that he would, "This chapter furnishes to us additional and very striking views of the admirable spirit, which actuated and fully possessed the apostles after the day of Pentecost. Behold their *moderation* and their *piety*, still gladly taking part in the Jewish worship, (1;) their *simplicity*, perfectly willing to be, and to pass for poor men; (6;)—their *tenderness* to the afflicted, (8, 7;) their *indifference* to themselves and *zeal* for their divine Master, (12, 13, &c.) their *boldness*, (13—15;) yet, withal, their *candour*, (17;) and their *affectionate compassion* for souls, (19, 25, 26.) What do we want as Christians, or as ministers, but to be formed to such blessed tempers as these, thus happily blended together? And by what means were the apostles formed to them but by the influence of that same Spirit, who is so firmly promised, and even urgently offered, to "every one," that asks his presence? This also repels the suspicion of enthusiasm. Where is the waywardness or self-sufficiency of an enthusiast? On the contrary, moderation, candour, and modesty, are united with most decided courage and most fervent zeal, in the conduct of the apostles.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—11.

The stated seasons of communion with God, and opportunities of doing good, will be welcomed with alacrity, proportioned to the degree in which we are spiritually

mind; for the carnal mind alone complains of their tediousness and too frequent returns; even as sickly persons loathe the sight of the food which the healthy relish and enjoy. Piety and charity should always be connected: they who are disabled from labour, ought to be supported by benevolence; but too often the impositions of the slothful and profligate give selfishness an excuse for turning away from real and known objects of compassion. Poverty and simplicity, in the ministers of Christ, are far better proofs of integrity and contempt of filthy lucre, than affluence, splendour, and luxury; and whilst the Lord employs others as his stewards, in dispensing wealth to relieve the necessities of their brethren, it should not grieve the "steward of the mysteries of God," if he be constrained to say to the expecting poor, "Silver and gold I have none, but such as I have I give unto thee." In every case, we ought to impart to others according to the ability which is given to us; and "where there is a willing mind, it is accepted of God, according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not;" and so it ought to be by our brethren. If we would attempt to good purpose the healing of men's souls, we must go forth in the name and power of Jesus Christ; calling on helpless sinners to arise, and walk in the way of holiness by faith in him. (*Is. xxxv. 6.*) We should indeed show affectionate regard to those whom we address; but nothing will be done, till the Lord puts forth his power; and then the most important will receive strength to "walk in newness of life," and show forth the praises of God, by cheerfully joining in his worship, and by cleaving to his ministers and people. Thus the attention of men is excited; facts proclaim the efficacy of the Gospel; and every true convert is a monument raised to the honour of the great Redeemer.

V. 12—18.

They who are honoured with usefulness, should be careful to remind the people, that, as the effects are not produced by their power, so they are not wrought for the sake of their holiness, but for the glory of that divine Saviour whom sinners still deny and despise; for though he is "the Prince of life," and "the Author of eternal salvation to all them who obey him," yet numbers prefer the company and favour of the vilest transgressors, and

46 vi. 7, 12.
47 Matt. xxi. 3, 4.
48 xxvii. 1, 2, 20.
49 John viii. 20.
50 xvi. 9.
51 b. v. 26.
52 2 Chr. xxviii. 4-7.
53 Luke x. 14.

* Or, ruler.

c. xxviii. 6-9.

Mat. xvi. 21, 24.

d. v. 17, xii. 45.

xix. 23, Neh. ii.

10 John vi. 17, 48.

c. x. 1-23, xvii.

10, 31, 32, xxvii.

14, 15, 21, xxvii.

1, 23, Rom. viii.

11, 1 Cor. xv.

12-20, 23, 2 Cor.

iv. 13, 14, 15.

v. 16, vi. 12.

viii. 2, ix. 2, xii.

xvii. 1-3, xvi. 19-24.

Mat. x. 16, 17, Luke xxi. 52, 54.

John xviii. 12.

2 Cor. v. 11-17, Phil. i. 12-16.

2 Tim. ii. 8, 10.

b. ii. 41, Gen. xlix. 10.

Is. xlv.

24, 111, 12, John xii. 24.

AND as they spake unto the people,^a the priests,^b and the * captain of the temple,^c and the Sadducees, came upon them;

2 Being^d grieved that they taught the people, and^e preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

3 And they^f laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now even-tide.

4 Howbeit, ^g many of them which heard the word, believed; ^h and the

number of the men was about five thousand.

5 And it came to passⁱ on the morrow, that their^j rulers, and elders, and scribes,

6 And^k Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

7 And when they had^l set them in the midst, they asked,^m By what power, orⁿ by what name have ye done this?

8 Then Peter, ^o filled with the Holy

18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

the indulgence of their ruinous lusts to him and all his blessings. But whether good have been done, or whether we have been enabled to fight successfully against sin and temptation; it hath been effected by faith in his name: and we must go forth to all our future labours and conflicts by the same faith, engaging his almighty arm to work in us, by us, and for us, that he may have all the glory.—They who reject Christ, do it through ignorance of one kind or another; this can in no case be admitted as an excuse, but it alleviates the guilt at some times far more than it does at others: and whilst unbelievers should be told of their sins and all their aggravations in the plainest manner, yet we should admit of any extenuation, which can fairly be supposed; and we should always be careful to show them, that the mercy of God in Christ Jesus gives them a ground of hope, notwithstanding all their crimes.

V. 10—26.

Blessed be God, that the sins of all, who repent and are converted, shall assuredly be blotted out: the connexion is now inseparable; and though the change must be wrought by the grace of God, men in general must be exhorted to repent and be converted, and assured of forgiveness and reconciliation to God, through Jesus Christ, in case they obey the call; and also warned, that, except they repent and be converted, neither the mercy of God, nor the blood of Christ, will save them from perdition. When sinners are convinced of these things, they will begin to cry to the Lord, “Turn thou me, and I shall be turned;” “Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me.” To the penitent, converted, and believing, times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord: even the seasons of his judgments on the wicked will be attended with consolation to the souls of his people; and the day of judgment, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed to take vengeance on his enemies, will complete their salvation; (2 *Thes. i. 6—8.*) That solemn period, when the earth shall be burnt up, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, will be to them “the restitution of all things,” “the manifestation of their adoption, and the redemption of their bodies;” (*Rom. viii. 19—23*); but every soul, who now refuses to hear, believe, and obey that Prophet like unto Moses, whom God hath raised up unto us, will then most certainly be de-

stroyed from among the people. Though we are not the children of the prophets, yet we are of those kindreds of the earth, who are called on to inherit the blessings procured by the promised Seed of Abraham: to us also are committed the oracles of God; to us the glad tidings are preached, that God so loved us, as to “send his Son Jesus to “bless us, in turning every one of us from our iniquities.” Let not sinners then imagine that religion calls them to be uneasy and unhappy; but rather that it kindly offers to guide them to true felicity: let none suppose that they can be happy by continuing in sin, when God declares that the blessing consists in being turned from all iniquity: let none think that they understand and believe the Gospel, who only seek deliverance from the punishment of sin, but do not expect happiness by salvation from sin itself: and let none expect to be turned effectually from their constitutional or customary iniquities, except by believing in Christ the Son of God, as their “Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption.”

NOTES.

CHAP. IV. V. 1—3. ‘Before our Lord’s passion, the chief agents against him were the scribes and Pharisees; but now the Sadducees became the fiercest adversaries.’ (*Whitby*.) The Sadducees, however, seem to have rapidly increased among the higher orders at this time: and as the testimony of the apostles to the resurrection of Jesus tended to subvert their scheme of infidelity, this was an additional reason for opposing their doctrine. It could not therefore be expected, but that, on this and on other accounts, the rulers of the Jews would persecute the apostles, as they had done Jesus himself. Accordingly, under the guidance of the person who presided over the guard of Levites, that constantly attended at the temple, they apprehended Peter and John as they were preaching, and cast them into prison, it being so late in the evening, that they could not then conveniently proceed against them.

V. 4. Many expositors think, that five thousand persons were converted on this occasion: but it rather seems that this number of believers was then completed: for it is not likely that any one day should be honoured with greater success than that on which the Holy Spirit first descended: nor do the words convey that idea to the mind, but rather that the number *became* about five thousand: yet they seem to imply that the women and children were not included.

Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

9 If we this day be examined of a the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

10 Be it ^a known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, ^a that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, ^a whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

11 This is ^a the Stone which was set at nought of ^a you builders, which is become the Head of the corner.

12 Neither ^a is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name ^a under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

13 ¶ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they ^b were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; ^c and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

14 And ^a beholding the man which was healed standing with them, ^a they could say nothing against it.

15 But when they had commanded them ^a to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

16 Saying, ^a What shall we do to these men? for that indeed ^b a notable miracle hath been done by them, ^a is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; ^a and we cannot deny it.

17 But ^a that it spread no further among the people, ^a let us straitly threaten

V. 5—12. Caiaphas seems to have performed the ordinary functions of the high priesthood, and Annas to have had the greater influence and authority in the council. (Note, Luke iii. 1, 2.) The other persons here mentioned were doubtless very considerable at that time; but there seems to be little either of certainty or importance in the conjectures which have been formed about them. "The kindred of the high-priest" must have been different persons from the heads of the twenty-four courses, as many of these were no more his kindred, than all the other priests were; that is, they were descended from Aaron, either by Eleazar, or Ithamar. (1 Chr. xxiv. 4—6.) The examination of Peter and John must have excited great attention, as all parties seem to have considered their interest, authority, reputation, and favourite systems, to be in the most imminent danger. In the question which they asked, they virtually allowed that an extraordinary cure had been performed; but they wanted to know whether it were the effect of a divine power, or of incantation by the use of some name, according to the notions which then prevailed: and Peter, "being filled with the Holy Ghost," felt none of those terrors, which had formerly led him to deny his Lord; but spake before that great assembly, with the utmost courage, liberty, and propriety. (Luke xii. 11, 12. xxi. 12—15.) He insisted that the action, about which they were cited to answer as criminals, was a good deed, an act of genuine mercy as well as of divine power; and he would have all the priests, scribes, and rulers, and all the whole nation, to understand that it had been wrought by the name, or power of Jesus the Nazarene, who was the Messiah. They had indeed crucified him as a deceiver, for declaring himself to be the Son of God; but his resurrection from the dead, by the power of the Father, had proved his high claim; and the man, who stood before them miraculously cured of his hopeless lameness, was a confirmation of their testimony to that event. Indeed Jesus was that illustrious person, of whom David prophesied, as of a Stone designed to be the Cement, Support, and Ornament of the whole spiritual temple;

and they were the builders, (by office and authority in the Church,) who had set at nought that Stone, and thrown it aside as utterly worthless. (Notes, &c. Ps. cxviii. 22, 23.) But, according to that prophecy, he was then exalted to the highest authority in heaven, as the anointed Saviour, and the only Mediator between God and man: inasmuch that there was no salvation in any other person or way, either for the rulers or people; nor any other name under heaven, by which sinners might be saved from destruction. This plainly intimated, that no man could be saved, except in a way of God's express appointment; and that the rulers themselves must either be saved by Jesus, or perish for ever. Some learned men have laboured to prove, that *healing*, or the cure of bodily disorders, is meant in the concluding verse, and not eternal salvation; because the same original word in some instances signifies *healing*. In fact it denotes *deliverance*, whether from disease, slavery, death, or damnation; and the context must fix the meaning. But in this place, the miracle of the man who had been healed was merely adduced as a proof that Jesus was risen from the dead, and consequently the Messiah the Son of God, and the only Saviour of sinners. The apostles, the rulers, and audience, did not all want miraculous cures of bodily diseases, but they all needed a Saviour and salvation: the name of Jesus is given to men of every age and nation, as that whereby alone believers are saved from the wrath to come; not from bodily sickness and temporal death: and every reader must perceive what energy there was in the address to the consciences of these persecutors, according to the obvious interpretation of it; and how this vain criticism enervates it, and causes all its spirit and vigour to evaporate. It is observable, that the rulers never mentioned to the apostles the report of their having stolen the body of Jesus, though they were so fairly called upon to do it: for they knew it to be a mere falsehood, and probably they acted against their own convictions, in pretending they were persuaded that Jesus was not risen. The insertion of *you*, in quoting the prophecy, was very pointed. It was saying to each of them, "Thou art the man."

mi 6 v 20. Luke
xiv 46-13
2 Cor. iv. 2
Eph. vi. 1
Tim. ii. 3.
o 29 Ez. i 17.
1 Kings xli 30
xiv. 16. xxi 11.
xxii. 14 2Kings
xv 15 18 19
xxv 19 20
xxvi 16—
20 Dan. iii 1—
vi 10, 11 Hos
v. 11 Am. vii.
16, 17 Mic. vi.
14. Matt. xxiii
23. Heb. xii 23
1 John. i. 1—
v. 9-12
P. lvi. ii. John
xii 25. 1 Cor.
x 25. Jam. ii.
4.
q. i 4. xvil. 16.
xvii. 5
Num. xxi. 13
xxii. 20 2 Sam.
xxiii. 2 Job
xxiii. 18-20
Jer. i 7. 17-19.
iv. 13. vi 11.
xx. 9 Ez. iii.
ii. 14-21. 36.
27. Mic. iii. 1
1 Cor. ix 16, 17
1 John i 3—
ii 6-9. 20 Matt
Matt. ix 20. Luke

them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

13 And they called them, and commanded them ^m not to speak at all, nor teach, in the name of Jesus.

19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, ^a Whether it be right in the sight of God, ^o to hearken unto you more than unto God, ^p judge ye.

20 For ^a we cannot but speak ^r the things which we have seen and heard.

21 So ^a when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing ^t how they might punish them, because of the people: ^u for all *men* glorified God for that which was done.

22 For the man was above ^x forty
 ---r i. 8. 22. iii. 15 v. 32. x. 39-41. xxii. 15. Luke i. 2. Heb. ii. 3, 4
 ---s 17 v. 40 ---t v. 26 Matt. xxi. 46 xxvi. 5. Luke xix. 47, 48.
 ix. 33 xv. 31. Luke v. 26. xiii. 17. John xii. 18, 19. ---x iii. 2. ix. 33.
 ke xiii. 11. John v. 5. ix. 1.

years old on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

23 And, being let go, ^y they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

24 And when they heard that, ^z they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, ^a Lord, thou *art* God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea and all that in them is :

25 Who ^b by the mouth of thy ser-
vant David hast said, ^c Why did the
heathen rage, and the people imagine
vain things?

26 The ^d kings of the earth stood up
and the rulers were gathered together
against the Lord, and ^e against his Christ

27 For of a truth, against ' thy holy

V. 13—22. *Unlearned and ignorant men.* * For three centuries, this was the objection against the professors of Christianity: yet it is a great confirmation of the faith, and shows, as Justin Martyr well observes, that it was not of human, but divine original; and that being with Jesus was sufficient to make the ignorant and 'unlearned wise.' (*Whitby.*) It is probable that the council had hoped to overawe the apostles into silence and submission, but when they found with what constancy and courage they replied, and with what boldness they charged them with having crucified the Messiah, and when they considered that they were persons of mean education, of obscure station, and strangers to the habits of public life, they were much surprised, and recollected that they had seen them with Jesus, when they had laid wait to ensnare him as he taught in the temple, or when he was apprehended. And as the man who had been healed was upon the spot, ready to attest the reality of the miracle, they could neither object any thing to the incontestable fact, nor deny the conclusion which was drawn from it. To conceal their perplexity, therefore, they ordered the apostles to withdraw for a while: and having consulted what they should do in so difficult a case, they agreed that it would be in vain to deny the miracle, as it was so evident to every body; yet it was necessary to do something effectual to stop the progress of a doctrine, which tended to bring disgrace and ruin upon them and their authority: they therefore determined, in defiance of their convictions, to forbid the apostles, in the severest terms, on pain of their heaviest displeasure, to preach any more in the name of that Jesus, whom they had just before punished as a deceiver; which sentence they resolved to justify, by proceeding against those that espoused the same cause. To this, Peter and John replied, with great constancy and propriety, by demanding, whether it was reasonable, or a *righteous* thing in the sight of God, to regard the injunctions of men more than His commandments? They were divinely commissioned to preach in the

name of Jesus; and, however they might respect the authority, or fear the indignation of their rulers, yet their inward conviction of the truth and importance of their doctrine, and the remembrance of those things, which they had witnessed concerning their crucified, risen, and ascended Lord, and heard from him, would constrain them to declare his name and salvation to all around them. The bold declaration induced the rulers to add still severer threatenings; but at the same time they dismissed them: for, having no plausible reason to allege, they dared not risk the consequences of punishing them, as the people showed them great favour, and acknowledged the miraculous cure performed to be a glorious display of divine power and mercy in the midst of them. Not only the energetic and conclusive *discourses* of the apostles are admirable; but “the meekness of wisdom,” united with firmness, which distinguish all their replies; replies often made to people whose presence must have been suited to daunt men of their station and their habits. They never shrink, and they are never disrespectful. They refuse to comply with the injunctions of their hostile superiors no further, than they feel themselves compelled to it by the imperious sense of duty. Their coolness and self-possession in the presence of persecutors is not that affected and ostentatious, and of course irritating, coolness which some have displayed, whose conduct has seemed to say, ‘How indifferent we are to you! how much we are your superiors! In fact, how much we despise you!’ This invites persecution; whereas the apostles always declined and avoided it, if they could. This smiling self-complacent coolness may be as very a working of corrupt nature, as fleeing from the cross, and not a much more difficult working in certain circumstances. It lives upon its own admiration, and the admiration which it expects from by-standers; food which will support nothing that “belongs to the Spirit.” It should be remembered, that this was the first time, in which the apostles were called to encounter opponents armed with power!

child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed,
both Herod¹ and Pontius Pilate, with
the Gentiles, and the people of Israel
were gathered together,

26 For to do whatsoever thy hand and
thy counsel determined before to be done.

29 And now, Lord, behold their
threatenings; and grant unto thy servants,
that with all boldness they may speak thy
word,

30 By stretching forth thine hand to

heal; and that signs and wonders may
be done by the name of thy holy child
Jesus.

31 And when they had prayed, the
place was shaken where they were assem-
bled together; and they were all filled
with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the
word of God with boldness.

32 And the multitude of them that
believed, were of one heart, and of one
soul: neither said any of them, that
ought of the things which he possessed
was his own; but they had all things
common.

V. 23—26. It is supposed that the company, to which the apostles returned, consisted of the hundred and twenty persons before-mentioned, who probably were assembled to pray in their behalf. Under the impression of the report made to them by Peter and John, and by the influence of the same Spirit, they all united, as with one heart and soul, in prayer to the Lord, as the omnipotent Creator of the world. (*Notes, Ps. ii. Marg. Ref.*) The expression made use of in applying this prophecy to Jesus, may refer to His immaculate conception by the Holy Spirit. Thus He received His human nature perfectly holy; and the unction of the same Spirit preserved that holiness in full perfection, through all the temptations and trials of His life and death; this consideration tended to aggravate the guilt of those, who hated and opposed this "holy Child," and righteous Servant of God. Yet both Herod the tetrarch, or king of Galilee, who professed the Jewish religion, and all the rulers of God's chosen people, and Pilate, who was a professed abettor, with the bulk of the Jewish nation, as well as the Gentile attendants on Pilate, had united together to treat him with the utmost cruelty and contempt. But they had only accomplished the counsels of God, which He had determined before to be done. (ii. 23.) 'The truth is clear, that God decreed that these things should be done; although He decreed not that the Jews should do them; but only permitted them to do what He foresaw they would, if they were thus permitted.' (*Hammond.*) It is then clear, that God, foreseeing this, decreed to permit them. 'As St. Peter and St. Paul, by calling the Jews to repentance for this sin, in crucifying the Lord of life, do evidence that their sin was not the less, because they did it to fulfil the counsel of God's holy will, and kind intentions to mankind: so they consequently evidence that God's foreknowledge and determination of a thing future, does not impair the liberty of men's will in the accomplishment of it, as all the ancient fathers have declared in this particular.' (*Whitby.*) 'We must not consider their work, who were wicked murderers, and profane enemies of the truth, but the work of God, which they fulfilled, without thinking of any such thing. This distinction, rightly observed, will satisfy all moderate men, that they should never separate the counsel and decree of God from His decreeing fore-

knowledge; and yet that they should fix all the blame of crimes on second causes, on the devil, for instance, and man. Thus God hardened Pharaoh; thus the king of Assyria was a saw, which God used; thus God gave to Absalom his father's wives; thus God called the revolt of the ten tribes his work; thus the wicked, by whom David was troubled, were the hands of God; thus Caiaphas prophesied; thus, finally, "God worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will." (*Beza.*) (*Notes, on Gen. i. 20. Ex. ii. 5—9.*)

V. 29—31. The disciples were persuaded, that the rage of their persecutors would be restrained and overruled for good: and they did not so much pray to be protected, as to be endued with boldness to declare their doctrine with liberty and energy, at all events; and that it might be confirmed as of divine authority, by continued miracles being wrought in the name of Jesus. Though they had been greatly injured and threatened, and could not but know, that they who had crucified their Lord sought to destroy them also, yet they desired no miracles of vengeance, but that God "would stretch forth his hand to heal;" for love to the bodies and souls of men had supplanted their selfish passions, and meliorated their zeal since they desired permission to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans. (*Note, Luke ix. 51—56.*) Some expositors have thought, that this prayer was immediately addressed to the Holy Spirit; by whose power the human nature of Jesus was formed in the womb, and who was the immediate agent in the work of creation, and in the miracles performed by the apostles. But this is not evident; and indeed there are few passages of Scripture, in which the Holy Spirit is evidently prayed to, personally, separately, and distinctly: perhaps, as prayer is presented both *by*, and *for*, the Holy Spirit, it may be the less proper to address it to him, except as one with the Father and with the Son, in the unity of the Godhead. These petitions, however, were immediately granted: the place in which the disciples were assembled was shaken, perhaps as it had been on the day of Pentecost by the rushing mighty wind; and they were all evidently filled with an abundant communication of the Holy Spirit, in all his enlivening, sanctifying, and comforting influences, as well as in respect of the extraordinary powers imparted to them.

CHAP. V.

Ananias and Sapphira, combining to tempt the Holy Spirit by a lie, at Peter's word fall down dead, 1—11. The apostles work many miracles, and have great success in their ministry, 12—16. The rulers cast them all into prison, 17, 18. An angel releases them, and sends them to preach openly in the temple, 19, 20. They are at length brought before the council; and, being examined, they boldly bear testimony to Jesus, as exalted to be a Prince and Saviour, 21—32. The rulers, being cut to the heart, purpose to slay them; but are restrained by the counsel of Gamaliel, 33—39. They are beaten, and dismissed with injunctions not to speak any more in the name of Jesus, 40. They rejoice in their sufferings, and proceed diligently in preaching Jesus Christ, 41, 42.

BUT a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

2 And ^b kept back part of the price, ^c his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, ^d and laid it at the apostles' feet.

3 But Peter said, Ananias, ^e why hath Satan filled thine heart to ^{* lie} to the Holy Ghost, and ^f to keep back part of the price of the land?

4 Whiles it remained, ^g was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? ^h Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

5 And Ananias, ^k hearing these words, fell down, and gave up the ghost: ^l and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

6 And the young men arose, ^m wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.

7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

9 Then Peter said unto her, ⁿ How is it that ye ^o have agreed together ^p to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, ^q the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.

10 Then ^r fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.

11 And ^s great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

hath work for such a man, he will restrain the wrath of his most potent enemies, or turn the tide of popular favour in his behalf, as he sees good.

V. 23—37.

Believers may, in various ways, be confined among those who fear not God; but being let go, they will return to their own company. Whatever trials we meet with, fervent prayer is our never-failing resource; and the more unite in it, as with one heart, the more signal answers may be expected. All things are alike easy to Him, who made the heavens and the earth: vain therefore must be the devices, which princes or people, how powerful or numerous soever they be, can imagine against the Lord and his anointed Saviour; for when power, policy, and tumult have done their utmost, they have but effected what "the hand and counsel of the Lord had determined before" should be done; and in effect they have only digged a pit for their own destruction, and rolled a stone that will rebound upon them and crush them to pieces. He knoweth the power and rage of our foes; and we should not so much pray for exemption from trials, and protection

from dangers, as for grace to enable us steadily to do our duty, and to glorify our God in the midst of them all. Our prayers should especially be presented in love, even for our bitterest persecutors: we should request that the Lord's hand may be stretched out to heal and to save, not to avenge and destroy. Thus we may expect to be effectually answered, and to be filled with inward confidence and comfort, amidst all outward tribulations. But let us carefully consider the effects produced by the pouring out of the Holy Spirit in those blessed days, when "great grace" was upon all; the company of believers. They were all of one heart and soul: they had but one common interest to attend on: their love to the brethren was united with equal contempt of worldly riches; so that the poorest had no want, the wealthiest no exclusive possessions. When such dispositions prevail, and are exercised according to the circumstances of the times, the testimony of ministers will have a peculiar energy upon the minds of their hearers, especially if their own conduct exhibits an example of integrity, disinterestedness and love; and if it is evident that, like their Master, they deem it "more blessed to give than to receive."

12 ¶ And ¹by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and ²they were all with one accord ³in Solomon's porch.

13 And of the rest ¹ye durst no man join himself to them: ²but the people magnified them.

14 And ¹a believers were the more added to the Lord, ²multitudes both of men and women;)

15 Insomuch that ¹they brought forth the sick ²into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were ¹healed every one.

NOTES.

CHAP. V. V. 1—11. The reputation acquired by those who sold their estates must have been very great; so that we need not wonder if in some instances it overpowered the fear of persecution, and excited the ambition of those who were not upright in the sight of God. But the increase of such professed Christians would have disgraced the cause, and diffused an infection in the Church. The Lord was therefore pleased to check this evil at the opening of the New-Testament dispensation, as he had others, at the promulgation of the law, (*Notes, &c. Lev. x. Josh. vii.*) Ananias and Sapphira, seeing how those persons were respected, who had parted with their whole substance to supply the wants of their poor brethren, agreed together to sell their land, to secrete a part of the money, and to give the rest to the apostles as the whole price. In doing this, they perhaps expected to have a maintenance from the common stock, and yet to reserve a part of their substance to themselves; yet the desire of reputation seems to have predominated. But Peter was immediately shown the deception which they were practising, and charged it upon Ananias in express terms. His language on this occasion implied, that whatever Satan might suggest, he could not have filled the heart of Ananias with this wickedness, had he not been consenting. Or "Why hath 'Satan emboldened thy heart, &c.'?" (*Esth. vii. 5. Ec. viii. 11. Heb.*) The falsehood told to the apostles was a bold attempt to impose upon the Spirit of truth himself, who so manifestly spake and acted by them; and this was to lie unto God, and not unto men; which is a plain testimony to the Deity and personality of the Holy Ghost. The estate continued Ananias's property even after his profession of Christianity; the sale of it was not a matter of compulsion, but of voluntary choice; and even the money, after it was sold, was at his own disposal: whence it appears that this liberality was not expressly required of the primitive Christians, but was the result of their abundant zeal and love. So that the crime of Ananias did not so much consist in retaining part of the price of the land, as in endeavouring, in so solemn a transaction, to impose upon the apostles with a pertinacious lie, the result of avarice combined with ostentation. As his death was the immediate effect of divine power, it struck terror into all who heard of it; and he was buried immediately in his own garments, without further preparation or mourning, as Sapphira was afterwards, when, persisting in the same horrid falsehood, she was struck dead by the awful judgment of God. This apparent severity on two detected

15 Insomuch that ¹they brought forth the sick ²into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were ¹healed every one.

hypocrites, was real mercy to vast numbers: it excited a reverential fear and a holy jealousy in the whole company; it doubtless induced them to strict self-examination, prayer, and circumspection, and a dread of hypocrisy, covetousness or vain-glory; it prevented the increase of scandals in the Church, and the intrusion of hypocrites; and thus it tended to render the Gospel honourable in the eyes of the people. We may also observe that this event was an evidence of the apostle's integrity and veracity, even to their enemies. God would never have inflicted such a judgment at their word upon inferior dissemblers, if their testimony to the resurrection of Jesus had been a deception; and it showed that they would not connive at iniquity in those of their own party, or for the sake of their private interest, or that of the society. Many expositors suppose that Ananias had made a vow (either publicly or secretly,) to give his estate for the support of the Christian cause, and that *sacrilege* was the crime for which he was visited; but the history never mentions this. He had, from corrupt motives, attempted to impose upon the apostles and upon the Holy Spirit; and his wife had joined him in this impious and hypocritical attempt.—The papists adduce this passage as a proof that the successors of Peter, (that is, the pope, and the ecclesiastics devoted to him,) are invested with the *secular* as well as *spiritual* sword. Let them, therefore, use the weapons of Peter, and none else, and see whether the same effects will follow. *Templ. &c. (9.)* 'As often as any thing is done with an evil conscience, so often men bring this sentence on themselves, and as much as lieth in them provoke God to wrath; as if they purposely aimed to make trial whether he be just and almighty, or not. (*Beza.*) The case, however, of Ananias and Sapphira was very peculiar, and their guilt exceedingly atrocious. (*Notes, Ex. xvii. 1, 2. Matt. iv. 5—7.*) This single example of severity was made, not on avowed enemies and persecutors, but on false friends. Thus Judas, not Caiaphas, was marked out, by his awful end, as the first object of divine vengeance on the murderers of Christ.

V. 12—16. Whilst just punishment was once miraculously inflicted, the power of God, by the hands of the apostles, was continually exerted in multiplied wonders of mercy. The whole company of believers were as firmly attached to the apostles, and united to each other, as before; and they constantly met at stated times in Solomon's porch, to join in the worship of God, when, probably, the apostles preached and wrought miracles, as opportunity was given them: but none of those who were not willing

17. Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation.

18. And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.

19. But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison-doors, and brought them forth, and said,

20. Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

21. And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

22. But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,

23. Saying, The prison truly found

we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.

24. Now when the high priest, and the captain of the temple, and the chief priests, heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.

25. Then came one, and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

26. Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: (for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned:)

27. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,

28. Saying, Did not we straitly command you, that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

to renounce all for Christ, ventured to join them; though they were greatly honoured by the people in general, and numbers of real converts were continually added by baptism to the Church, and by faith to the Lord. *Join himself, &c.* (13.) As if he had been a believer, and by way of putting a cheat on the apostles. Such unbelievers as were displeased with the apostles, and hated the cause, would have been glad to put any trick upon them, that they might thereby lessen their esteem among the people, yet durst not seeing it might prove no less than fatal for any to go about to deceive them. (MS. Com. on the Bible.) Indeed, the power of God so evidently attended the apostles, that the people, both in Jerusalem and the adjacent towns, applied for miraculous cures, by laying their sick in every street, that the very shadow of Peter as he passed along might fall upon them, from which they expected the benefit; nor were any of them disappointed! As Peter was the readiest speaker, and stood foremost in every transaction, and as he was one of the first that experienced persecution, so it seems that he was more noticed by the people, than any of the other apostles in these miracles.

V. 17—25. These transactions could not but perplex and enrage the high-priest and his party, whether their personal interests and reputation, or their political views, were considered; especially that prevailing party which had adopted the *heresy* of the Sadducees must foresee the ruin of their sect, as the consequence of the success of the Gospel. The word rendered *indignation* is *zeal*; that is, for their peculiar tenets. They therefore imprisoned all the apostles, as disturbers of the public peace, in the common jail designed for the vilest malefactors: but an

angel, unperceived by the keepers, set them at liberty, and ordered them to go boldly into the temple, and proclaim to the people, "all the words of *this life*," that is, the whole Gospel, by which alone sinners can obtain eternal life. This direction was an intended exception to the general rule before given, that "when persecuted in one city they should flee to another," which present circumstances required for the triumph of the Gospel, the encouragement of believers, and the confusion of their enemies. Accordingly they obeyed without hesitation; and the report brought to the council evidently showed that the deliverance of the apostles had been miraculous, and that they were not at all afraid of their persecutors. The council assembled on this occasion seems to have included many who did not generally attend, and indeed were not stated members of the Sanhedrim.

V. 26. 'Tyrants, not fearing God, are constrained to fear their own subjects.' (*Besa.*) (*Marg. Ref.*) Perhaps the expectation of a temporal kingdom was revived by the miracles of the apostles, among the bulk of the common people; so that, while they neither understood nor embraced the Gospel, they favoured the cause and excited the fears of their persecuting rulers.

V. 28. 'It is peculiar to tyrants to obtrude their own commands, instead of any reason or argument.' (*Besa.*) The rulers feared lest the success of the apostles in preaching that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was the promised Messiah, should exasperate the people against them as his murderers; and they concluded that they meant to excite an insurrection, in order to deprive them of their authority, or to put them to death: at least they charged the apostles with such intentions. (*Marg. Ref.*)

Str. an. iv. 19.
Geno. iii. 17.
1 Sam. xii. 7-9.
Mark vii. 7-9.
330. xiv. 8-12.
John. 13-15.
1 Chr. xii. 17.
xxix. 18. Ezra.
vii. 27. Luke. 1.
59. 72.

1. 22. xii. 37.
1. 22. 22-24. 32.
1. 10. 11. xii. 22.
1. 22. Gal. 1.
1. 1. 1. 24.
1. 1. 31. 36. iv. 11.
Ps. lxxxix. 12.
21. cx. 1. 2. 2.
Matt. lxxxix. 18. Eph.
1. 20. 23. Phil.
1. 20. 11. 1. 1. 22.
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29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered, and said, "We ought to obey God, rather than men."

30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree:

31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

34 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation

among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;

35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.

36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.

37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel, or this work, be of men, it will come to nought:

39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

V. 31. (Notes, ii. 36. iii. 12-26. iv. 9-12.) Jesus is exalted to be the ruler and Judge of all men, and the Saviour of all that believe. "Repent, and believe the Gospel," is the summons to all; and none but the penitent do truly believe. Through this exalted Prince and Saviour, the Israelites, and even the rulers who had crucified him, were encouraged to repent, by the proposal of forgiveness; and suitable instructions, motives, and exhortations, were given them. Thus he gave them room, or place, for repentance; in which sense the phrase, here employed, has been once used by Josephus. Yet it is the doctrine of scripture, (*Marg. Ref.*) and of our liturgy, that true repentance is the gift of God; and to exclude this most obvious meaning of the words, as many expositors do, is in fact an attempt to improve the language of Scripture, and to obscure one evidence of our Saviour's Deity, and of all salvation coming wholly from his fullness of grace. Indeed 'repentance was not actually wrought in Israel by his efficacious grace; that is, not in all Israel; for it certainly was in great numbers; but if any who heard the apostles were convinced that they must repent, or perish, yet found their hearts still hard and their wills rebellious, was it not a most important and seasonable instruction, to be assured that Jesus was exalted "to give repentance," as well as pardon to the penitent? that, as one with tears cried to him, "Help my unbelief," they might cry to him, "Turn thou me, that I may be turned;" "Pour on me the Spirit of grace and supplications, that I may look unto thee, whom I have pierced, and mourn," with "that godly sorrow, which worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of." *Metanoia*, when it signifies the awakening and

'change of the mind for the better, is the gift of God, of his mere grace.' (*Beza.*)

V. 32. So is also the Holy Ghost. The testimony, arising from this miraculous communication of the Spirit to Christians at that time, entirely removes the objection from Christ's not appearing in public after his resurrection. For had there been any imposture, it had been easier of the two, to have persuaded the people at a distance that he had so appeared to the Jewish rulers, or even to the multitude, and yet had been rejected, than that he had given his servants such extraordinary powers. Since, had this assertion been false, every one might have been a witness of the falsehood of such a pretence, without the trouble and expense of a journey to Jerusalem, or any other distant place. (*Doddridge.*) The word rendered *obey*, seems to imply both faith and obedience. 'There is no true obedience without faith, or true faith without obedience.' (*Beza.*)

V. 32-39. (ii. 37.) The rulers were cut by the words of Peter; they were convicted, tortured, enraged, and alarmed, but not humbled or changed: they gnashed their teeth, as if one drew a saw, (*Beza.*) and therefore they desperately counselled to put the whole company of the apostles to death. But Gamaliel, (whose reputation is very great among the Jews to this day, and who seems to have been a man of great judgment and prudence in secular matters,) advised them against so violent a measure. He seems at the time to have had some conviction of the truth of the Gospel: but, as he was Saul's tutor, who was a determined persecutor, it may be questioned whether he long retained his tolerating principles. However, he was a Pharisee, and, as such, a decided opposer of

40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, ^a and beaten *them*, ^b they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

41 And they departed from the pre-

sence of the council, ^c rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer ^d shame for his name.

42 And ^e daily in the temple, ^f and in every house ^g they ceased not to teach, and ^h preach Jesus Christ.

the Sadducean system: and from recent instances, he showed that the interposition of the council, in so decided a manner, was neither needful nor safe. 'Here Gamaliel affirms two things. First, that before those days arose Theudas; whereas the Theudas, mentioned by Josephus, arose and perished by the hands of Caspius Fadus, in the fourth year of Caligula, that is, ten years after the meeting of this council: and secondly, that Judas arose after him, in the days of the taxing, which was thirty-four years before this council. Origen, who had read Josephus, and declares that he examined things relating to the Scriptures, *out of a love to truth*, speaks thus: 'We say that there was one Theudas before the birth of Christ, who among the Jews declared himself to be somebody.' And again, 'that Judas Galileus, and Theudas, *who was before him*, perished. And a third time, Because they gathered from the Scriptures, that the time of the Messiah was come; *first* Theudas, and after him Judas, tumultuated during the taxing. Hence do the fathers unanimously say, that those words of Christ, "All that came before me were thieves and robbers," relate to these two, Theudas, and Judas of Galilee; which shows their belief, that both of them were before the time of Christ's preaching. So that it is extremely evident that the ancient fathers agreed in this, that there was a Theudas, pretending to great things, even before the coming of our Lord, though Josephus has taken no notice of him.' (Whitby.) Dr. Lightfoot supposes, that the Theudas, mentioned by Josephus, was the Son of this Theudas; and that he took his name, as engaging in the same enthusiastic attempts. St. Luke merely records Gamaliel's speech; and it is indisputable, that he spake of facts well known to his hearers. As to Josephus, his mistakes and omissions are so numerous and palpable, that it is mere trifling to oppose his authority to other authentic histories, or to facts, which, at the time, were known and allowed to have occurred. From these premises, however, Gamaliel justly inferred, that if the apostles were employed in propagating an imposture, it would at length be detected, and come to nothing, without the rulers incurring the hatred and resentment of the people by contending against it. But on the other hand, if indeed it were the cause and work of God, (which they were not sure that it was not,) they could not possibly prevail against it: for if they put the apostles to death, some other persons would be raised up to carry it on: at the same time they would be found to fight against God, and would thus bring upon themselves the weight of his omnipotent vengeance. *Let*, in this clause, connects with "Let them alone," in the preceding verse. According to this opinion, which was the verdict of common sense, and supported by the most conclusive arguments, the continuance of Christianity to this day, a religion, neither

supported by human authority, nor paying court to any of man's corrupt passions, nay, opposed by all the power, wealth, philosophy, learning, superstition, idolatry, false religion, vices, and popular prejudices of the whole world, and declaring exterminating war against all the corrupt propensities of the human heart, without favouring one more than another, and also the ruin of the Jewish Church and nation, as well as of other persecuting powers, are irrefragable demonstrations that it was no work or counsel of men, but indeed a revelation from God; and that they who opposed it actually fought against him, and incurred his righteous displeasure for so doing. How different the introduction of Christianity in the world, and its preservation and continuance to this day, from those of Paganism and Mahomedism!

V. 40. The whole council agreed to Gamaliel's advice, and did not proceed to put the apostles to death: yet their enmity and rage so far prevailed, that they ignominiously scourged them for disobedience to their former orders, and renewed their prohibition of preaching any more in the name of Jesus.

V. 41, 42. (Marg. Ref.) 'The apostles went away rejoicing; rightly judging that a punishment of this kind, though generally shameful, became a glory to them, when borne in so excellent a cause, and for the sake of Him, who had submitted not only to stripes, but to death, for them. And every day they ceased not to pursue this great work; but took all opportunities to preach in the temple, and from house to house: and on the whole, it was their constant business to teach and preach Jesus as the Messiah.' (Doddridge.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—16.

No state of the Church hath yet occurred entirely free from hypocrites and other evils, resulting from human depravity and the subtlety of Satan; nor is there any thing so excellent, which artful men will not counterfeit, to gratify their avarice or love of praise. But the partiality of numbers, even in external duties, proves their insincerity; and shows, that they want to reconcile the service of God and mammon, and the reputation of piety, with the interests of the world. When Satan is permitted thus to fill the hearts of deceivers with wicked devices, they attempt, and often successfully, to impose upon the ministers of Christ; whilst he their Judge, who hath the keys of death and hell, sees all their secret wickedness, and prepares to expose and punish it. And does not this narrative most solemnly warn us, to watch against and subjugate all our passions? not only the violent and disgraceful, but the plausible likewise: the love of money and of reputation: the ambition, not only of worldly

CHAP. VI.

Seven persons, chosen by the church, under the direction of the apostles are appointed to superintend the daily ministration to the poor; that none might be neglected, and that the apostles might give themselves to the word of God and to prayer, 1—6. The word of God

greatly prevails, 7. Stephen, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, confutes those who disputed against him, 8—10. They suborn witnesses, who before the council falsely accuse him of blasphemy against the law and the temple, 11—14. His face shines like the face of an angel, 15.

honour, but that of consequence in the Church also?—Deceit and lies are in all things hateful to the God of truth; but much more so, when introduced into the immediate concerns of religion. How then must he abhor those lying professions, subscriptions, and engagements, which numbers make at his table, or when they enter into the sacred ministry! Surely it may be said to every such person, “Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.” If any of us are conscious of having committed such an enormous crime, let us be thankful, that the doom of Ananias hath not been ours; and let us show our deep repentance, by keeping at the utmost distance from a repetition of so atrocious a provocation. They who combine together, and encourage one another to tempt the Spirit of the Lord, may expect to be joined in the same awful punishment: and when notorious criminals escape with present impunity, they are only reserved to the day of judgment for more tremendous vengeance. But on special occasions the Lord interposes in an extraordinary manner, to detect such offenders, as are about to become a snare to some and a scandal to others. Such righteous severity often proves an important benefit to multitudes, by guarding them against hypocrisy, and exciting them to watchfulness and prayer. Whatever tends to the purity and reputation of the Church, eventually promotes its enlargement. When unsound professors are excluded, or detected, the surest method is taken to bring in an increase of true believers: and if the apparent harshness, which ministers must at some times necessarily exercise, be connected with manifest and enlarged benevolence, that unfavourable impression, which might otherwise be made upon the minds of men, will be prevented, and they will notwithstanding possess confidence and affection. But that power alone, which wrought such astonishing miracles by the hands of the apostles, can rescue sinners from the power of sin and Satan, and add them as believers to the company of spiritual worshippers. God will, in some degree, work by all his faithful servants; and every one, who applies to him, shall certainly be healed.

V. 17—32.

How wretched must they be, whose vexation is increased by the success of the Gospel! They may grow more violent in enmity and opposition; but in vain will they attempt to confine those whom the Lord wills to be at liberty; to slay those whom he wills to live; to disgrace those whom he wills to honour; or even to distress or affright those whom he wills to be joyful and courageous;

His mighty angels delight to minister to his persecuted servants; and, at the least intimation of his purpose, they are equally ready to destroy their persecutors. As long therefore as we are preserved in life, we should go on with our several duties: and they, who are called to preach the Gospel, should be “instant in season and out of season,” without yielding to fear, or self-indulgence, in preaching all the words of this life to mankind. How vain, yet how obstinate, is the contest, which men maintain against their Creator! They see, at times, that the word and hand of the Lord are against them, and they tremble for the consequences; yet they will proceed! And after all their convictions, they are more restrained by the fear of man, than by the “fear of him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell!” Such men have often opposed their mandates and authority to those of God, and accused the most exemplary and peaceable ministers of sedition and rebellion; because their doctrines tended to expose the wickedness of their opposers in its proper colours to mankind. We must, however, adhere to our principles: “we ought to obey God rather than man;” and they, who persist in opposing Christ and his cause, must bear the blame. He is a gracious Saviour to all those who submit to him as a Prince; and he will employ all his power to protect and exalt them likewise. He delights in forgiving the penitent, yea, in giving repentance and remission of sins to all the chosen Israel of God; nor will he withhold these inestimable gifts from any who seek to him for them. But he will surely destroy all those who will not have him to reign over them: this every man will perceive, in proportion as he regards the testimony of his apostles and of the Holy Ghost, whom God hath always given to those who obey his beloved Son.

V. 33—42.

While convincing arguments and reproaching consciences increase the rage of determined enemies, the Lord still varies his methods of defeating their malignant purposes. He hath all hearts in his hands: and he sometimes uses the candour and sound policy of learned and eminent men, who do not embrace the Gospel, to moderate the counsels of outrageous and irrational opposers. Common sense suggests a caution to every considerate man, to take heed to himself what he does, respecting, those who seem to be the servants of God. Experience and observation determine, that the success, or reputation, of religious impostures, not supported by human authority, or by flattering any man’s vices and corrupt affections, will be short lived. The abettors of such designs have recourse to unallowed means, to gratify their ambition, or compass their secular

7 And the word of God increased:
 Col. i. 6 2 Tim. i. 9
 2 Xxi. 20 Gr.

7 And the word of God increased:
 and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great

company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

b Rom. i. 5. xvi. 26 2 Thes. i. 8. Heb. v. 9. x. 5.

congregation ought to choose its own *pastors*, or for popular elections of ministers in any way, proves nothing. (*Marg. Ref.*) Men are generally careful enough to intrust their property in the hands of suitable persons; but their souls are seldom more in danger, than when they follow teachers after their own hearts. Beza, indeed, seems to think, that if the apostles would not appoint deacons, except by the choice of the Church, much less would they ordain ministers; but this only proves that scriptural ground, for that plan which he zealously supported, was not easily found, and that arguments were scarce. Whatever may be said about the expediency, or in expediency, of these arrangements, *their divine authority* must be considered as another question. It must, however, be allowed, that matters are far removed from what is reasonable, scriptural, or profitable, respecting the general management of these most important concerns, in almost every part of the visible Church. It has been generally taken for granted, that these seven persons were ordained or appointed to the office of *deacons*; yet they are not called so, either in this chapter, or elsewhere; and, as the word rendered *deacon* is often translated *servant*, or *minister*, and used concerning Christ himself, (*Rom. xv. 8*;) some have seemed even to question, whether there were such a distinct order in the Church, during the times of the apostles. Nothing, however, can be more evident, than that such an order existed, and was well known, when St. Paul wrote his epistles to the Philippians, and his first epistle to Timothy, (*Phil. i. 1. 1 Tim. iii. 8—13*.) 'Now if they,' (the deacons,) 'were not instituted here by the apostles, I desire to know when, where, and by whom, they were instituted, and what other record we have left us of such an institution of them?' (*Whitby*.) If, then, the office of deacons was instituted on this occasion, it seems undeniable, that they were appointed solely to take care of the temporal concerns of the Church; and not, as deacons, to preach, or to administer sacred ordinances, except by assisting the elders, presbyters, or bishops, as some think they did, in distributing the bread and wine at the Lord's supper. 'This is as true of the deacons mentioned by St. Paul, (*1 Tim. iii*;) there is not a word said of their ministering at the altar.' (*Whitby*.) He might have added, 'or of their preaching.' Yet it is plain, that Stephen did preach, and that Philip both preached and baptized: and he is even called "the Evangelist," (*Note, xxi. 8*.) It therefore occurs, to inquire whether they became preachers of the Gospel before their appointment as deacons, or afterwards. The following remarks are of some importance in this question. 'The choice was committed to them,' (the laity;) 'yet this was done by the particular appointment of the apostles. They specify the number, and the qualifications, of the persons to be chosen to this office. They reserve to themselves the appointment of them to this work, and they laid their hands on them. So, in the case of the rulers over thousands, &c. Moses saith, as here, "Choose to yourselves men of wisdom and understanding, and known to your tribes; and I will set

"them to be your heads." Accordingly he both appointed them, and instructed them in the discharge of their office. (*Deut. i. 23—27*.) But it seems very unlikely, that the apostles would have made this one requisite of the persons to be chosen, that they should be "full of the" extraordinary gifts of the "Holy Ghost;" 'if their office had confined them to the ministry of the widows at Jerusalem.' 'Being "men full of the Holy Ghost;" 'and of that wisdom which enabled them to teach others, we cannot reasonably conceive that they were disabled, by their ordination to this office, from doing that work for which they were fitted, and as it were appointed, by these gifts of the Spirit conferred on them. In a word, it is evident from this history, that before the ordination of these deacons, the apostles themselves were engaged in this work; for the treasure of the Church was "laid at the apostles' feet, and distribution was made of it to every man according as he had need." This distribution therefore must be made by them who had this treasure in their hands; and therefore they appointed these seven over this business, to ease themselves of the trouble, that they might give themselves more entirely "to prayer and to the ministry of the word." Now surely that work which the apostles personally performed for a season must be consistent with their commission to "teach and baptize all nations." (*Whitby*.) This statement does not prove, what the learned author seems to have intended, that the deacons, *as such*, were appointed to preach and baptize: but to me, at least, it renders it highly probable, that some of the seven were previously ministers or evangelists; and that they spared time from their ministry of the word for this service, as the apostles had done before their appointment. Some of the fathers assert, that they were all of the number of the seventy disciples; but of this there is no proof. In the abundance of spiritual and miraculous gifts communicated at this favoured season, it is highly probable that many were thus qualified for important services, who had not at present a call or opening to perform them. The apostles, in counselling the Church, make no distinction between such as had been employed in the ministry and others; and probably some of each were chosen. Stephen and Philip, we may suppose, were of the former; and when Stephen was martyred, and Philip fully engaged at a distance, others might be chosen as deacons. And it appears to me very likely, that both at this, and future periods, many who were appointed deacons in the first instance, afterwards became evangelists or pastors; and when they were fully employed, other deacons were appointed. Let it be especially noted in this connexion, that they, who claim to be exclusively, or particularly, the successors of the apostles, should be more excluded from temporal concerns than even other ministers, "that they may more entirely give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word." *Laid their hands, &c.* 'The Christian Church observed this rite, both in ordaining ministers, and in conferring the gifts of the Holy Spirit.' (*Beza*.)

V. 7. 'A happy event of a time of trial.' (*Beza*.)

c 3, 5, 10, 15, vii.
35. Eph. i. 11.
1 Tim. i. 12.
d 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

8 ¶ And Stephen, ^c full of faith and power, ^d did great wonders and miracles among the people.

9 Then ^e there arose certain of ^f the synagogue, which is called the *synagogue of the Libertines, and ^g Cyrenians, and ^h Alexandrians, and of them of ⁱ Cilicia, and of ^j Asia, ^k disputing with Stephen.*

10 And they were not ^m able to resist the wisdom and ⁿ the spirit, by which he spake.

11 Then ^o they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak ^p blasphemous words against the law, and against God.

12 And ^q they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, ^r and caught him, and brought him to the council,

13 And ^s set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law :

14 For we have heard him say, ^t That this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall ^u change the ^v customs which Moses delivered us.

* Gal. ii. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

The triumph of divine grace, in the conversion of "a great company of the priests," (considering the heavy loss which they must in consequence sustain, and the persecution to which, in an especial manner, they must be exposed from the unbelieving priests and rulers, in addition to their peculiar prejudices against the Gospel,) has appeared to some, even *evangelical* expositors, too extraordinary to be *probable*; and they propose, *without authority*, to alter the text, and to read, "and a great company, with some of the priests, were obedient to the faith." But that divine illumination and grace, which caused Saul, the persecutor, "to count all but loss for Christ;" and when "he had suffered the loss of all things, to count them "but dung, that he might win Christ," would be sufficient for these priests also. Indeed, the triumph of the Gospel, without this, would in some respects have been incomplete, and it does not become us, either to alter the Scriptures, or to veil the glory and splendour of divine grace. There were several thousands of priests in the days of Ezra, (*Ezra* ii. 36—39 :) and a great company might embrace the Gospel, and yet a large majority might persist in unbelief. It is probable, though not mentioned, that many of these converted priests would become ministers of the Gospel.

V. 8. 'It appears plainly from the foregoing history, that it was not as a deacon, that Stephen preached; but the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, he received, eminently qualified him for that work. And no doubt many Christians, not statedly devoted to the ministry, and whose furniture was far inferior to his, would be capable of declaring Christ and his Gospel to strangers, in an edifying and useful manner, and would not fail accordingly to do it, as Providence gave them a call and an opportunity.' (*Doddridge*.) 'He that will plead a commission from God to preach the Gospel, without an ordinary mission, must show the like extraordinary gifts or miraculous assistances: God never sending any person to do his work, without some testimony from himself, or from persons commissioned by him.' (*Whitby*.) It is most likely, that Stephen was previously a preacher: but, if he was not, it can hardly be supposed, that he would undertake that important office, however qualified, at Jerusalem; and amidst the apostles, without their sanc-

tion; or that others, in such circumstances, would do this. 'But, at the same time, it may fairly be allowed, that extraordinary cases may arise, which would justify the dispensing with ordinary rules; and remarkable persons may be raised up, though not endued with miraculous powers, who may be fully warranted to teach the ignorant, not only privately, but in the most public manner; though not expressly appointed to the ministry. It is certain, that John Baptist wrought no miracles: yet his ministry, as entirely distinct from the priesthood, was from God, without any human appointment: and it is far from clear, that all the prophets wrought miracles; and they were not sanctioned, but opposed, by the stated ministers of religion: yet their calling was divine. This appeared by the agreement of their instructions with the Scripture, and the effects of their labours. Yet general rules, though they admit of some exceptions, form the measure of our conduct in ordinary cases, and it is extremely dangerous to give a kind of unlimited sanction, to all who suppose themselves, or are supposed by their favourers, to be qualified for the public ministry, to engage in it, without any appointment from the Church and its ministers.

V. 9—14. There was a number of synagogues at Jerusalem, belonging to different descriptions of strangers residing there; some of whom were proselytes, and not of Jewish extraction. The libertines seem to have been the descendants of persons, who had been slaves, and had obtained their freedom; though some think, that they were Jews, who were admitted to the privilege of Roman citizens. Each of these synagogues had an academy belonging to it, where students were instructed by some Rabbi: so that these teachers, or their more forward scholars, seem to have challenged Stephen to a disputation concerning his doctrine. But they were baffled by him in argument: for he had not only truth on his side and eminent abilities; but the Lord had endued him by the Holy Spirit, with such wisdom, judgment, temper, and utterance, as they could not withstand. (*Luke*, xxi. 15.) Instead, however, of yielding to conviction, they bribed certain unprincipled persons to accuse him before the people and the rulers, as an enemy to the Jewish church and nation: so that he was violently seized and brought

Y. E. XXXIV 29—
 25. Ec. viii. 1.
 Matt. xiii. 43.
 xxi. 2. 2 Cor.
 xiii. 7. 8 18.

15 And all that sat in the council, face as it had been the face of an angel, looking steadfastly on him, saw his angel.

before the council, and charged with blasphemy, for having said that Jesus of Nazareth, (whom they mentioned with the utmost contempt,) had declared that he would destroy the temple, and abrogate the Mosaic law. No doubt Stephen foretold, that Jesus would destroy the city and temple, in case the nation of the Jews persisted in their opposition to him: but, as the apostles did not understand, till long after, that the Mosaic law was to be abrogated, so we may conclude, that this was their inference from his doctrine: and as the temple and city had before been destroyed, and yet the legal ceremonies had not been altered, so this inference was precarious, and their testimony false. But there was no blasphemy in these words, if he had really spoken them; for they were literally verified a few years after, according to predictions of the ancient prophets, and the types of the law itself, when rightly understood. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 15. When the members of the council steadfastly looked on Stephen, to observe whether he showed any signs of guilt or terror, they saw his countenance calm and serene, and irradiated probably in a miraculous manner, as the face of Moses had been when he came down from the mount; so that he appeared more like an angel than a man, as he stood before them. But as they disregarded other miracles, so they remained unmoved even by this divine attestation to his character. It is remarkable, that he, who was accused of blaspheming against Moses, should, in the presence of those who "sat in Moses's seat," be thus honoured, even as that lawgiver had been, when he came down from the mount of God.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—7.

Unless undue self-love could be wholly destroyed out of every heart, envies, murmurs, jealousies, and discontents, will creep in, and in some degree disturb every community on earth, however collected and governed. We must not then be surprised to find such things; they belong to human nature: even apostolic administration could not wholly exclude them; and that, even among persons endowed with great grace. It is likewise almost equally difficult to exclude abuses, even where men are exceedingly desirous of doing it. And as it is not to be expected that the administration of affairs, either in nations, or in any part of the visible Church, will be conducted with apostolic disinterestedness, wisdom, and sanctity, the subject before us may serve to repress our murmurs against governors and established authorities, though we cannot cordially approve of their measures; for unreasonable expectations always end in bitter disappointments. We should, however, repress the first rising of selfish passions in our own hearts, and endeavour to prevent them, or remove all occasions of them from others, as far as we can: and if they begin to appear, such concessions and regulations should be made without delay, as may disappoint that enemy, who thus seeks to divide the house and kingdom against itself. In general, the ministers of Christ should leave to others

the management of secular concerns, even of such as belong to the Church, or to charitable institutions, that they may keep clear of all suspicion of partiality or injustice, and be more at liberty for their proper work. But if it is unreasonable and sinful for them to leave the word of God, even to superintend the care of the poor, and such secular concerns as have an intimate connexion with piety and charity, how inexcusable must they be, who leave their public ministry, and even the care of the poor and sick, to others, and waste their time in dissipated pleasures, luxurious indulgence, ambitious and covetous pursuits, and such studies as are foreign to their clerical profession; and who spend their time, abilities, and zeal, in political disputes! If men are not qualified even "to serve tables," or regulate charities, except they be of honest report, and endued with heavenly wisdom and grace, how pernicious must it be, to commit the important trust of "watching for men's souls," to such persons, as are evidently destitute of these endowments! It therefore behoves those, who are concerned in choosing, appointing, or ordaining men to any office in the Church, to do it with good advice, serious deliberation, and fervent prayer for divine direction. —When proper methods have been taken to prevent disputes, and to preserve the peace of the Church, and to secure an upright, impartial, and prudent management of all her concerns, and when pastors are left at liberty, and are disposed "to give themselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word;" it may be expected that the cause of truth will gain ground, that the number of disciples will be multiplied, and that even the most prejudiced will be won over to embrace the Gospel; and when such priests, or teachers, as have been blind, prejudiced, or careless, become obedient to the faith, it may be considered as a peculiar triumph of divine grace, and a most important advantage to the Church.

V. 8—15.

They who are full of faith will be full of power; though not for working miracles, yet to resist temptations, to endure hardships, and to perform arduous services; and when the Saviour calls men forth to contend earnestly for the truth, he will "give them a mouth and wisdom, which all their enemies will not be able to gainsay, or resist." But worldly disputants, when thus disconcerted, commonly have recourse to other weapons to defend their errors and to gratify their resentment. In ordinary cases, ridicule and abuse may suffice; but when enmity to the Gospel concurs with the indignation of being defeated in a vain-glorious contest, a more base and injurious method of revenge will frequently be devised. How irrational a creature is man! To assert that an intelligent being is capable of deliberately supporting a system of religion by subornation, perjury, lying testimony, and murder, might have been deemed a libel on reason itself, had it not been done in numberless instances. But the blame rests not on the understanding, so much as on the heart, of a fallen creature, "which is deceitful above all

CHAP. VII.

Stephen, being required to answer before the council, shows how God called Abraham, and promised Canaan to him and his seed, 1—8; how Joseph was sold by his brethren, and Jacob with his family went down into Egypt, 9—16: that when they were oppressed by the Egyptians, Moses was born, and brought up by Pharaoh's daughter, 17—22; that attempting to deliver Israel, he was rejected and fled into Midian, 23—29; that at length he was sent to be their deliverer, 30—36; that he prophesied of Christ, received the law for Israel, and was grieved by their rebellion and idolatry, 37—43; that they had the tabernacle of witness, till Solomon built the temple, 44—47; yet according to the prophets, "the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands," 48—50. He boldly accuses the council of imitating the rebellion and persecution of their ancestors, who rejected and slew the prophets; and charges them with murdering Christ, in violation of their own law, 51—53. Being cut to the heart with these sharp reproofs, they hasten to stone him; while he, favoured with a vision of Christ, and calling on him to receive his soul and pardon his murderers, falls asleep, 54—60.

THEN said the high priest, ^a Are these things so?

^a vi. 33. Matt xxvii. c. 62. Mark xiv. 50—60. John xviii. 19—21. 33—35.

"things, and desperately wicked." They, who prefer human traditions and reasonings to divine revelation, will frequently charge those with blasphemy, who speak according to the oracles of God; and false testimony is often borne through prejudiced conclusions from men's words, or wrong constructions put on them. But the servant of the Lord, possessing a clear conscience, a cheerful hope, and divine consolations, may smile in the face of danger and death; and may appear, amidst his most furious persecutors, not only as "a lamb in the midst of wolves," but even as an angel surrounded with malignant demons.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII. V. 1—8. This speech of Stephen may be considered, either as an answer to the accusation brought against him, or as his testimony to Jesus Christ; and the same arguments would serve both purposes. As he was not permitted to conclude, so we have here rather an introduction to his main subject, than the whole of his intended discourse. There was peculiar wisdom in re-

2 And he said, ^b Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; ^c The God of glory ^d appeared unto our father Abraham, ^e when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in ^f Charran,

3 And said unto him, ^g Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into ^h the land which I shall shew thee.

4 Then ⁱ came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

5 And ^k he gave him none inheritance in it, no, ^l not so much as to set his foot on: ^m yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, ⁿ when as yet he had no child.

6 And God spake on this wise, ^o That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil ^p four hundred years.

7 And ^q the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that, shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.

8 And he gave him ^r the covenant of circumcision. ^s And so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day: ^t and Isaac begat Jacob; ^u and Jacob begat the twelve ^v patriarchs.

^x Gen xxix. 25—35. xxx. 1—24. xxxv. 16—18. 23—25. Ex. i. 1—4. i. Chr. ii. 1, 2.

b xlii. 1. xlii. 1. c Ps. xxiv. 7. 10. xlii. 1. 14. vi. 3. Matt. vi. 12. Luke. ii. 31. John. i. 11. xli. 41. 2 Cor. iv. 11. — 8. Tit. ii. 13. Gal. iii. 15—17. Rev. iv. 11. 12, 13. d Gen. xli. 1. Neh. ix. 7. 10. 11. 12. e Josh. xxiv. 2. f Gen. xi. 31. xli. 5. xlii. 4. He. xii. 9. g Gen. xli. 1. Mat. x. 37. Luke xiv. 31. 2 Cor. vi. 17. Heb. xi. 14. h Gen. xlii. 14. i Gen. xli. 14. j Josh. xxiv. 3. Neh. ix. 8. k Gen. xi. 31. 32. xli. 4. 5. b. xli. 2. l Gen. xlii. 3. Ps. cv. 11. 12. m Ps. lxxv. 9. 10. 13—16. n 1 Deut. ii. 5. o Gen. xli. 24. 25. 15. xv. 15. xlv. 2. xlv. 2. xlviii. 12—15. xlv. 2. 7. 3. Deut. ii. 10. 11. 12. 3. 4. 11. 3. 9. xxiv. 4. Neh. ix. 8. Ps. cv. 8. — 11. p Gen. xv. 2—5. xvi. 2. xlvii. 19. — 19. q Gen. xv. 13. p Ex. xii. 40. 41. Gal. iii. 17. r Gen. xv. 11. — 16. Ex. vi. 16—18. s Gen. xii. 10. 11. 12. Ps. lxxv. 12. — 14. lxxviii. 43. — 45. cv. 27—32. cxxxv. 5. 9. cxxxvi. 10—15. Is. li. 9. 10. t Ex. xli. 12. 12. u Gal. iii. 9. 14. John vii. 22. Rom. iv. 10—12. Gal. iii. 15—17. v Gen. xxi. 12. xxi. 2—4. — 6. w Gen. xxi. 21—26. i. Chr. i. 34. — Matt. i. 2. Rom. ix. 8—13. — 15. x i. Chr. ii. 1, 2.

fering to these ancient records of the nation, and in speaking honourably of those characters, for which his hearers professed so great a veneration, and so strong a regard, though they neither understood the general plan of God's dealings with their ancestors, nor entered into their views, nor copied their examples. The animation and beauty of the address must be in a great measure lost to us, unless we could place ourselves in the very situation of the Jews, and appropriate, as it were, their peculiar sentiments and feelings on these subjects. Stephen was accused of predicting the abrogation of the ceremonial law, as if the intimation of such a change was blasphemous: whereas, in fact, the best and most eminent persons among their ancestors lived before the promulgation of that law; which could not therefore be essential to the acceptable worship of God. This seems to have been covertly insinuated in the beginning of his discourse, which Stephen opened in the language of respect, deference, and affection. He observed, that the God, who is altogether glorious, and the Fountain of glory, and who had shown his visible

Gen. xxxvii 4 9 And the patriarchs, ^a moved with
 Matt. xxvii 18 envy, ^b sold Joseph into Egypt; ^c but
 Gen. xxxvii 18 God was with him,
 Gen. xlv 4, 5
 1. 18-20. Ps.
 cv 17, 18.

10 And ^c delivered him out of all his
 afflictions, ^d and gave him favour and
 wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of
 Egypt; and he made him governor over
 Egypt, and all his house.

11 Now ^e there came a dearth over
 all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and
 great affliction: and our fathers found no
 sustenance.

12 But ^f when Jacob heard that there was
 corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first;

13 And at the second ^g time ^h Joseph
 was made known to his brethren; and
 Joseph's kindred was made known unto
 Pharaoh.

14 Then ⁱ sent Joseph, and called his
 father Jacob to ^j him, and all his kindred,
 three score and fifteen souls.

15 So ^k Jacob went down into Egypt,
 and died, he, and our fathers,

16 And ^m were carried over into Sy-
 chem, and laid in ⁿ the sepulchre, that
 Abraham bought for a sum of money
 of the sons of ^o Emmor, the father of
 Sychem.

glory in the camp of Israel, in the tabernacle, and in the temple, first appeared to Abraham, (not in Canaan, to which they thought his peculiar presence limited, but) in Mesopotamia. As the history has already been considered, I shall here only advert to those things, which involve difficulty, or form an essential part of Stephen's argument. Both "Ur of the Chaldees," and Charran, or Haran, were, properly speaking, in Mesopotamia; though Haran was much nearer to the promised land. From the calling of Abram, to the *Erodus*; was four hundred and thirty years. Twenty-five elapsed before Isaac was born; and tradition reports that he was five years old when weaned, and when Ishmael, who was of Egyptian extraction by his mother, mocked him. The apostle considers this as a species of persecution, and many date these four hundred years from that event. "The covenant of circumcision," is that covenant, which was sealed by circumcision, above four hundred years before the promulgation of the Mosaic law. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 9-14. (*Notes, Gen. xlvii. 7. 12. 15. 21. 27.*) Seventy persons, including Jacob and Joseph, and Joseph's two sons, are reckoned up by Moses; among whom were some grand-children of Benjamin, who was not above twenty-five years of age when Jacob went down into Egypt. Now several grand-children of Joseph are named in Chronicles, (1 Chr. vii. 16. 20.) who are not mentioned in Genesis. It is undeniable, that some of the grand-children of Jacob's sons, who afterwards became heads of families in their tribes, were included in the number stated by Moses: is it not the most obvious way of settling the difficulty, between his account and that of Stephen from the Septuagint, to include five grand-children of Joseph? Many learned men indeed would make up the number, by the wives of the patriarchs: but it must have been very extraordinary, that with so many sons and grandsons, there should have been no more than five women. And, if there were many more, why should five only be here added to the number? Only two females, (Dinah, and Serah, a descendant of Gad,) are mentioned in Genesis: and the Septuagint, which Stephen, (who probably was a Grecian, *Note, vi. 1.*) seems to have quoted, may be thus translated. "All the souls which came with Jacob into Egypt, who came out of his loins, besides the wives of Jacob's sons, all the souls were

"three score and six. But the sons of Joseph, who were born to him, were nine. All the souls of the house of Jacob, who went down with Jacob into Egypt, were three score and fifteen souls." Joseph and his two sons and Jacob himself, complete the three score and ten of our version: and though the Septuagint is not very accurate or perspicuous in this statement, three things are sufficiently clear: 1. That the additional five mentioned in it were not women. In fact, with what propriety could the wives of Jacob's sons be said to come out of his loins? 2. That they were sons, or male descendants, of Joseph. And 3. That the family of Jacob, containing some born in Egypt, and Joseph who was carried thither long before, as well as Jacob and those who went down with him, are included. "Reckoning some of the children born in Egypt, together with Joseph and his sons, and his sons' sons, made up seventy-five persons." (*Hammond.*)—Joseph was the peculiar favourite of God, and an eminent type of Jesus; yet his brethren hated and envied him: but they could not prevent his exaltation, which was the means of their preservation. The argument of this passage seems to have been, that as their fathers must have perished, if Joseph, whom they had envied and injured, had not been advanced to authority, and thus enabled to preserve them, so must the Jews perish, unless Jesus, whom they had despised and crucified, but whom God had highly exalted, should graciously save them. As therefore Joseph's brethren at length submitted to him, and were forgiven, so ought they to submit, and seek forgiveness from the glorified Messiah. (*Notes, &c. Gen. xxxvii—1.*)

V. 15, 16. It appears from this passage, and it is indeed highly probable in itself, and confirmed by ancient tradition, that the bodies of all Jacob's sons were embalmed, and carried up by their descendants, to be interred in Canaan. Jacob was buried in the cave of the field of Machpelah, with his fathers, Abraham and Isaac. This, Abraham bought of Ephron the Hittite: but Joseph, and probably his brethren, were buried at Sychem, or Shechem, in the piece of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Emmor, or Hamor, the father of Shechem; and which he left as an inheritance to the descendants of Joseph. (*Marg. Ref.*) "Jacob died, he and our fathers, and they," (our fathers) "were carried over to Sichem and buried; He," (that is, Jacob,) "in the sepulchre

p. Gen. x. 13

v. 16, 2 Pet. iii.

3-9

q. xlii. 17, Ex. i.

v. 16, 20, 15,

cy 24

r. Ex. i. 8.

18 Till

19 The same dealt subtilly with our

kindred, and evil-entreated our fathers,

so that they cast out their young children,

to the end they might not live.

20 In which time

Moses was born,

and was

exceeding fair, and nourished

up in his father's house three months :

21 And

when he was cast out, Pharaoh's

daughter took him up, and nourished

him for her own son.

22 And Moses was

learned in all

the wisdom of the Egyptians,

and was

mighty in words and in deeds.

23 And

when he was full forty years

old, it came into his heart

to visit his

brethren the children of Israel.

24 And

seeing one of them suffer

wrong, he defended him, and avenged

him that was oppressed, and smote the

Egyptian :

25 For he supposed his brethren would

have understood, how that

God by his

hand would deliver them :

but he understood not.

26 And

the next day he shewed

himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, I've are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?

27 But he that did his neighbour wrong, thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?

28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?

29 Then smote Moses at this saying; and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons.

30 And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord, in a flame of fire in a bush.

31 When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him,

32 Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.

33 Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet; for the place where thou standest is holy ground.

34 I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people, which is in Egypt, and

26 And the next day he shewed

himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, I've are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?

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Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.

33 Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet; for the place where thou standest is holy ground.

34 I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people, which is in Egypt, and

26 And the next day he shewed

"which Abraham bought for a sum of money; and they," (the other patriarchs,) "in that of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sychem." This rendering has been proposed by several eminent men, to remove the obvious difficulty of reconciling the passage with the history in the book of Genesis. "Or we must say, with the great Bochart, that some unskilful grammarians, thinking that a nominative case was wanting before the word *avvato*, (was bought,) wrote in the margin the word Abraham, which others put in the text, without which the words run thus, with exact truth." "So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died the and our fathers; and they," (our fathers) "were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre, that was bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sychem." (Whitby, V. 17-29. (Notes, Exod. i. ii.) The words here rendered, "exceeding fair," are literally "fair to God," which some have rendered, "Beloved by God;" but this does not seem to be a just translation: nor is there any ground to conclude, either that he prophesied, as some have supposed, or indeed had true faith and grace, till a short time before he visited his brethren. If therefore the expression be any thing more than a Hebraism, denoting his singular beauty, it must refer to the Lord's special designs concerning this child, which induced him to preserve

him, when other children were destroyed; and his extraordinary beauty was the means used for that purpose. He might be "mighty in words," as capable of calm, forcible, and conclusive reasoning, and yet be slow of speech, and destitute of the graces of elocution, as he modestly pleaded concerning himself. (Marg. Ref.)—Moses had received some general intimation, that he should deliver his people; (as David was assured that he should reign over Israel,) but he seems not to have been expressly commissioned to attempt their deliverance at this time. From some general computation, it is probable he supposed that the appointed time was at hand; but forty years more must have elapsed before that event. He also concluded, that when so distinguished a person as he had been in Pharaoh's court renounced all his prospects, to join interests with his enslaved people, as the deliverer whom God had raised up, they too, remembering the prediction and promise to Abraham, would readily attach themselves to him: but in this he found himself mistaken. *Who made, &c.* (27.) 'The speech of this single person is represented, (35,) as expressing the sentiments of the whole body of the people; as their slowness afterwards to believe the mission of Moses, when attested by miracles, seems evidently to show that it was.' (Dodridge.) *Stranger.* (29.) (Note, Ex. ii. 22.)

41 ¶ Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, * speaking unto Moses, * that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen;

45 ¶ Which also our fathers † that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, * whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, † unto the days of David;

46 Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

47 But * Solomon built him an house.

48 Howbeit, the Most High * dwelleth not in temples made with hands; * as saith the prophet,

from the clause, "took up the tabernacle, of Moloch," that shrines of Moloch, or models of the idol-temple and the image within it, were publicly carried in procession by the worshippers; which we may be sure Moses would not allow. (Note. xix. 23—31.) They therefore suppose, that God, as a punishment of the idolatry of Israel, in worshipping him under the image of the golden calf, in after ages, gave up the nation to still more abominable idolatry, till they had filled up the measure of their crimes, and were sent into captivity, into Chaldaea, Media, and still more distant regions. Many intimations, however, are given by the prophets, that the grossest idolatries were secretly practised, even in the wilderness. This had been the conduct of their ancestors in all former ages, and the Jews had no cause to glory in them: God had before given up the nation to idolatry and captivity; and they had no reason to confide in present external privileges, but rather to fear the terrible judgments of God for crucifying the Messiah: and as the prophets had formerly predicted the Assyrian and Babylonish captivity, which had come to pass accordingly; so they had no right to blame Stephen for predicting the approaching ruin of their city, temple, and nation, if they persisted to oppose the religion of Jesus. The law, as given by Moses, considered in itself, was "the ministration of death:" but, as connected with the types, prophecies, and instituted ordinances, which contained the substance of the Gospel, under that dispensation, the way of life eternal was pointed out, and known in a measure by all true believers; and in this sense, even the books of Moses were "lively oracles," a revelation by which numbers obtained eternal life, through faith in him, of whom Moses in the law, as well as all the subsequent prophets, bare witness.

V. 44—50. After the giving of the law, the Israelites had worshipped God, not in Canaan, or at Jerusalem, but in the wilderness; and not at a stately temple, but at a moveable tabernacle. This was carried into the promised land by their fathers, under the leading of Jesus, or Joshua, (the type of Jesus the Messiah;) and as it witnessed the gracious presence of God with them, and their relation to

49 * Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: * what house will ye build me? saith the Lord; or, what is the place of my rest?

50 Hath * not my hand made all these things?

51 Ye * stiff-necked and * uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always * resist the Holy Ghost: * as your fathers did, so do ye.

52 ¶ Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them * which shewed before of the coming of * the just One; * of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:

him, being typical of good things to come, which appeared by the injunction given to Moses about forming it; (Note, &c. Ex xxv. 40:) so it answered that purpose for several hundred years after their settlement in Canaan. And though David, having been highly favoured and prospered, desired greatly to build a temple; (Notes, &c. 2 Sam. vii:) yet he was only allowed to make preparation for it; because he had been a warrior, and had shed blood; and therefore the building of the temple was reserved for Solomon, his peaceable Son, who was an eminent type of the Messiah. Yet, when Solomon had finished his magnificent edifice, he considered it merely as a symbol of God's merciful presence with his true worshippers, and not as a real habitation for the Deity, as if JEHOVAH must needs continue his regard to it and the people, however they behaved: and the language of their prophets, as well as the Babylonish captivity, should have taught the Jews to expect that the temple would be destroyed, whenever their presumption and rebellion provoked God to turn against them, and be their enemy; (Notes, &c. 1 Kings viii. 27. Is. lxvi. 1—3.) The chosen race, Abraham and his seed, had served God above four hundred years before the law of Moses was promulgated, or the tabernacle erected; and Solomon's temple was not built till four hundred and eighty years afterwards. So that nearly half the time from the calling of Abraham till the coming of the Messiah, the true worshippers had served God without the temple; and could those things be essential to true religion, which had not existed during so many ages?—The tabernacle of witness. (44) Thus the Septuagint translates the Hebrew phrase, which may signify the tabernacle of meeting; namely, the place where the congregation assembled; where they hoped to meet God with acceptance; and where he had appointed to meet them. (Marg. Ref.) 'As Stephen had been accused of blaspheming the temple, he, with great propriety, takes occasion to speak of their sacred places with due reverence, as raised by special direction from God; and yet corrects that extravagant regard to them, and confidence in them, which the Jews were ready to entertain.' (Doddridge.)

CHAP. VIII.

The disciples, "except the apostles," are dispersed by persecution, 1. Devout men bury Stephen and lament over him, 2. Saul makes havoc of the church, 3, 4. Philip preaches in Samaria, and has great success, 5—8. Simon, who had long bewitched the people by sorceries, believes and is baptized, 9—13. Peter and

John, being sent thither, by prayer and imposition of hands, confer the gift of the Holy Ghost, 14—17. Simon, offering money for the like power, is by Peter rebuked, warned, and called to repent, 18—24. The apostles having preached in the cities of Samaria, return to Jerusalem, 25. Philip is sent by an angel into the desert of Gaza, 26; where he meets

prayed for his crucifiers, beseeching him not to charge the guilt of this atrocious murder to those who perpetrated it; (*Luke xxiii. 34—46:*) and with these words he expired with the composure of one who falls asleep. However distressing the loss of such a man in this manner must have been to the Church, yet how animated was his end! How suited to confirm their faith! What an example also, his boldness, his tenderness for even his murderers! The instruction and encouragement of this single scene might produce the most beneficial effects on multitudes, and that permanently, even far greater than the long continued labours of many eminent ministers. Such in general has been the event of bloody persecution; and 'the noble army of martyrs' have done more, perhaps, towards the success of the Gospel, by their sharp but transient sufferings, than the whole company of those who have professed and preached the truth in quiet times; and without being called forth thus to show, in the fiery trial, the energy of their principles and power of divine grace, to the confusion of their enemies and the encouragement of their brethren. This was a most direct act of adoration and divine worship rendered to Jesus, appearing in human nature, as the Son of man, and attended by a vision of the glory of God. To receive a departing soul to glory, and to pardon the guilt of most aggravated murder, are acts of divine power and authority; and it would be evidently most unreasonable, as well as unscriptural, to make such requests to any mere creature, whether present, or absent. Indeed, the Socinians are most grievously perplexed by this undeniable fact: after many other attempts to evade our inference from it, in which they have been evidently baffled in the argument, some very learned men have lately ventured to say, 'that the example of a man, in an ecstasy of devotion, and in the agonies of death, is not proper to be imitated by the whole Church of God!' As if modern reasoners could better direct our faith and practice than this apostolical Protomartyr, when full of the Holy Ghost, when immediately favoured with the visions of God, and when replete with the very light, joy, and temper of heaven itself! And let it here be observed, that we bring a very large number of positive evidences to support the truth of our doctrine: if then objectors make only feeble efforts to invalidate the testimony of each of them, considered as detached from the rest, so that each still evinces the point in question, how very powerful must be the combined proof of the whole! For if twenty, or forty, or more such texts were expunged out of the Bible, we should not want sufficient, yet, unanswerable, evidence of the Deity of Christ. It is here also inquired, by what authority the Jewish council

put Stephen to death? In the case of Jesus they allowed that they had no such authority: and it is probable that the case was still the same. Had they proceeded to pass a legal sentence on Stephen, they would perhaps have obtained permission from Pilate to execute it: but they stoned him in a popular fury, without any regular sentence, and the governor might choose to connive at it, as he did at some of their subsequent persecutions. When the Jews would afterwards have put Paul to death, the chief captain and the governor hindered them: yet, if he had been killed, it is not unlikely that the irregularity would have been connived at, had he not been known to be a Roman citizen. The sceptre, however, was gradually departing from Judah; and the Romans continually entrenched more and more upon the authority of the high-priest and council, till the whole was subverted; for Shiloh was come, and now the gathering of the people was to Him. (*Note, Gen. xlix. 10.*) 'If the spirit of a man died with his body, no reason can be given, why St. Stephen should pray to the Lord Jesus to "receive his spirit," rather than his body.' (*Whitby.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—8.

We should be ready to give a reason of the hope that is in us to inquirers of every description: and though it should be done in meekness, and with cautious fear of disgracing a cause, which ought to be dearer to us than our lives, yet we may confidently rely on the Lord to give us in the same hour what we should speak, if called to answer for ourselves before the enemies of his truth. Whatever bold application we may intend to make of the doctrines which we inculcate, we should ever speak with evident benevolence; and it is proper to render civil respect and honour even to those superiors, against whose usurped or abused authority we are constrained to protest. In all addresses to those, who allow the truth of the Scriptures, we should call their attention to them, lodge our appeal with them, and thence deduce our arguments. It is very lawful and expedient to accede to men's opinions, as far as consistent with truth, and even to avoid the mention of their more harmless prejudices, in order that we may reason with them from their own principles, and so oppose their erroneous conclusions and evil practices. It is also profitable to recur to the first rise of those usages or sentiments which have been warped or perverted. Would we know the nature and effects of justifying faith, we should study the character of "the father of the faithful." His calling out of his own country by the God of glory

with an eunuch, the treasurer of Candace queen of Ethiopia, returning from Jerusalem, and reading the prophecy of Isaiah, 27, 28. By a divine monition he joins the chariot, and entering it, he preaches Jesus to the Ethiopian, 29—

to whom he had been a stranger, and his obedience and walk with God as his friend and worshipper, may teach us the efficacy and freeness of divine grace, the nature of conversion, and the way to follow the Lord in faith and hope, and to wait for him in humble patience. Here too we may see that external forms and distinctions, though idolized by numbers, are of small value, compared with dependence, submission, obedience, separation from the world, and devotedness to God. The promised seed must be sojourners in a strange land: their inheritance is in reversion, and must be waited for: they will be evil intreated in this world, and they should leave it to God to judge their oppressors. Our deliverance from the bondage of sin and Satan is an introduction to our serving the Lord according to his word; and though the external seals are not always posterior in time to the grace of the covenant, they are in all cases greatly subordinate to it; yet exact obedience in these and all other things is our duty.

V. 9—29.

They, whom God most favours, will often be envied and injured, even by those who are of reputation in the visible Church. But though the troubles of the righteous may seem grievous and tedious, yet the Lord will deliver him out of them all: and wisdom, favour, and preferment, are given by him alone. He often renders the most despised persons the instruments of saving those who condemned them; even as the crucified Jesus was “exalted to be a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness to Israel.” The promises of God will all be accomplished in due season, and nothing can retard or hasten that appointed time. All earthly friends may fail, or requite our services with black ingratitude; but the Lord will not forsake his people. In the darkest times of persecution, when treachery and cruelty have combined to destroy the Church, the most eminent instruments of its deliverance have been raised up: and when peculiar services are to be performed, God will furnish his servants with suitable qualifications, and sometimes by means of those aliens, against whom they are to be employed.—Many useful persons have lived for years among the enemies of God, and have possessed authority, wealth, or reputation in the world: but when he puts it into their hearts to join themselves to him and his people, they readily renounce their advantages, and endure reproach, hardship, and affliction, for his sake. Difficulties and perils await the believer, not only from open enemies, but from false or heartless brethren: and they, by whose hands the most extraordinary services have been performed, have long found that the people understood not the Lord’s intentions respecting them: They, who do wrong, are generally impatient of rebuke: and Jesus himself is rejected as a Ruler and a Judge, because his commands and decisions

35; who, professing faith in him as the Son of God, is baptized, 36—38. The Spirit conveys away Philip, who preaches in the cities on the sea-coast, till he comes to Cesarea; and the eunuch returns home rejoicing, 39, 40.

run counter to men’s lusts and iniquities. He, who labours to persuade the professed people of God to cease from their disgraceful and pernicious contests with each other, will generally meet with abuse from those who are most evidently in the wrong, as if he wanted to usurp authority not belonging to him. But though men thus prolong their own miseries, yet the Lord will take care of his servants, and compass his own designs of mercy; and years of retired contemplation, devotion, and humble industry, are as useful to his servants as those spent in a learned education, or in the active scenes of life; whilst a willingness to labour in obscurity, after having shone in more public stations, is a happy indication of heavenly wisdom and genuine magnanimity.

V. 30—43.

The best of men have cause to stand in awe, and even to tremble in the presence of God. Though in infinite condescension he is pleased to dwell in his Church, as in a burning bush, to put honour on it, notwithstanding its meanness, and to preserve it amidst its fiery trials, he sees the affliction and hears the groaning of his people: yea, he often sends his ministers to rescue sinners, when they are disposed to reject them. If we would have Jesus for a Deliverer, we must submit to him as a Ruler, and wait for him as a Judge, else we shall perish with the Egyptians, and not be saved with the Israelites. He is the great Angel of the covenant, who brings his people from bondage through the wilderness to their promised rest; and all the scenes exhibited in Egypt, at the Red Sea, at Sinai, and in Canaan, shadowed forth his excellencies and his glorious salvation. But as Israel thrust Moses from them, and would have returned to their bondage, so men in general will not obey Jesus, because they love this present evil world; and any kind of false religion or irreligion, however absurd, by which men rejoice in their own works and imaginations, is more suitable to the carnal mind than his spiritual truth and worship. Thus God is provoked to give men up to their lusts and delusions, and so they fill up their measure of sin and perish.

V. 44—60.

Every review of the history of the world, of the Church, or of our own hearts and lives, tends to exclude boasting, and to cover us with shame; and the whole Scripture proclaims man to be a proud, ungrateful rebel against God. He works by various means and instruments, and men are almost universally guilty of neglecting or of idolizing them. But as “heaven is his throne, and the earth his footstool,” so none of our services can profit Him, who made all these things; and next to the Human Nature of Christ, the broken and spiritual heart is his most

11. 14, 15, 40. vi.
x. 8.
m. 1. Matt. x. 5.
6.

n. 35-37. v. 42.
12. 20. xvij. 12.
5. John. iv. 25.
26. 1 Cor. i. 23.
m. 2. iii. 11.
o. xiii. 4. 2 Chr.
xxx. 12. Matt.
xvi. 15, 16. John
27. 41, 42.

5 Then ¹ Philip went down to ² the city of Samaria, ³ and preached Christ unto them.

6 And the people ^o with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

7 For ^p unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed *with them*: and many taken with ^q palsies, and that were ^r lame, were healed.

8 And ^s there was great joy in that city.

1. Matt. x. 1. Mark. vi. 13.
xvi. 17, 18. Luke x. 17. John xiv. 12. Heb. ii. 4.
q. 1. 35. 34.
Mark. ii. 3-11.
r. 11. 6, 7. x. 48.
20. 15. xxv. 6.
Matt. xi. 5. Ps. 36, 31.
s. xvi. 48. 52. P. xxvii. 10 - 12.
xxvii. 5-6. 15.
Rom. xv. 9-12.

xxx. 1, 2. xiii. 10-12. Luke ii. 10, 11. Rom. xv. 9-12.

none were scattered, except the ministers, (which is not probable;) it seems incongruous, to limit the number in this manner. 'There is no room to inquire where these poor refugees had their orders. They were endued with miraculous gifts; and if they had not been so, the extraordinary call they had to spread the knowledge of Christ, wherever they came, among those who were ignorant of him, would abundantly justify them in what they did.' (Doddridge.) Were all the Christians endued with miraculous powers? Or might none, who were not, declare what they had seen and heard? 'Some difference' perhaps be here observed between *ευαγγελίζεσθαι*, and *κηρύσσειν*: not in respect of the matter of their preaching, but of the manner of it. The latter signifies a public solemn proclaiming of Christ, as when a herald or crier doth by way of office proclaim any thing: but the former imports no more than the telling it, making it known, as good news is published without the voice of a herald or crier, by all that have heard it, to all they meet with. —Not that this word is never used of that public authoritative proclaiming; for it is sometimes used of the apostles: and the word Evangelist is the name of an office in the apostles' time. But I say, that sometimes, and particularly in this place, it may belong to whatsoever publishing the Gospel of Christ, and by whomsoever, that is, by those who have no calling to it. For when the doctrine of Christ was first preached by the apostles, and a multitude of Jews and proselytes received the faith, and for doing so, professedly, were presently persecuted and driven out of Jerusalem, it is not to be imagined but that all, wheresoever they came, both men and women, published what they knew, both of the doctrine, and the miracles by which it was confirmed, and of their own sufferings for it. When of Philip, who was a deacon, it is related, that 'he preached Christ,' 'it follows, that he baptized also. But of these other disciples there is no more said, but that they passed along publishing this good news, the Gospel which they had received; but no mention of gathering disciples, or baptizing. Accordingly, when mention is made of those very men, who being scattered by the persecution, spake the word, or published the Gospel, the phrase used is observable. (xi. 19.) The word *λαλεῖν* being known to belong to any way of reporting, or relating, by tale or discourse: and upon the success of this, through God's prospering hand, and many receiving the faith, it follows, that the Church of Jerusalem sent Barnabas to visit and confirm them. Thus Apollos, (xviii. 25.) spake and taught diligently the things concerning the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.' (Hammond.) It appears to me, that the remarks contained in this quotation are suited to throw

light on a difficult and disputed subject. Whether the learned author's criticism be exact, or not, the difference between statedly and authoritatively, as a herald, and by office and authority preaching to regularly convened congregations, or simply declaring what a man knows of Christ and salvation, among relations, juniors, ignorant neighbours, or ignorant persons of any sort, without assuming any authority, seems of great importance. No doubt, in this way, a man's sphere will often gradually enlarge, till he appears something like an authoritative preacher: but would it not then be proper, that pastors and rulers should send some Barnabas to confirm what has been done, and to confer the due authority? and would it not be right, in this case, for the person himself to seek from the pastors and teachers of the Church their regular sanction to his labours, now become more public than he at first either expected or intended? To authorize all who choose, without any human appointment, and even in ordinary cases, to become authoritative preachers, seems a dangerous extreme; and to suppose that no man, in an ignorant family, or among poor children, or illiterate neglected persons, may expound a chapter of sacred Scripture, or talk to them about their souls, except previously ordained to the ministry, appears suited to destroy all zeal in the laity for the success of the Gospel, and to prevent all communication of knowledge to a deluded and perishing world, except by those, who are so fully employed in their own several charges, as to have little opportunity of attempting any thing further, and who are often restricted by peculiar circumstances from every exertion out of their own line and department.

V. 5-8. It is evident that Philip the apostle was not here meant, for he continued at Jerusalem; and the mission of Peter and John to Samaria evinces the same; and as Philip, one of the seven, was the only person of that name which the historian had mentioned, he was doubtless here spoken of. (Note, vi. 2-6.) As Jesus had stayed three days among the Samaritans, and had mentioned them among those to whom the apostles were to preach, (i. 8;) so they seem not to have hesitated about their admission into the Church, notwithstanding the bigoted enmity of the Jews against them. Probably, Philip went to the same city, Sychar, where Christ had preached: and though the impressions made by his ministry might in some instances have been effaced, yet, when Philip preached Jesus to them as the promised Messiah, and wrought many signal miracles in proof of his resurrection from the dead, they with one consent attended on his ministry, and expressed great joy throughout the city, that this blessed Gospel of Salvation had been sent to them, and that they were invited to share the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom.

9 ¶ But there was a certain man called Simon, which before-time in the same city ^{used} sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, ^{giving out} that himself was some great one;

10 To whom ^{they} all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is ^{the} great power of God.

11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time ^{he} had bewitched them with sorceries.

12 But when ^{they} believed Philip, preaching the things ^{concerning} the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, ^{both} men and women.

13 Then Simon himself ^{believed} also;

and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, ^{and} wondered, beholding the ^{miracles} and signs which were done.

14 ¶ Now ^{when} the apostles which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had ^{received} the word of God, they sent unto them ^{Peter} and John:

15 Who; when they were come down, ^{prayed} for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost.

16 (For as yet ^{he} was fallen upon none of them: ^{only} they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

17 Then ^{they} laid their hands on them, ^{and} they received the Holy Ghost.

V. 9—13. It seems evident that Simon actually used sorcery, and produced many extraordinary effects by satanical influence, and not merely by human imposture; (Note, Ex. xxii. 18:) so that whilst he boasted, "that he was some great one," the Samaritans were so exceedingly astonished at his sorceries, that they seemed even to be fascinated into a belief, that he was a man by whom the great power of God was most signally displayed and exerted: perhaps he pretended or was supposed to be the promised Messiah. Ecclesiastical historians have given us strange accounts of the horrid blasphemies which this man propagated; but that seems to have been subsequent to the events here recorded. The evident and beneficent miracles of Philip, however, confirming his doctrine concerning the kingdom of God and the salvation of Jesus Christ, being attended by a peculiar blessing, effectually rescued the people from their infatuation, and prevailed on them to profess their faith in Christ by being baptized: and as in Christ there is no distinction of male or female, so both men and women were thus received into the Church. Perhaps Philip exposed the nature and tendency of Simon's magical arts: at length, however, that sorcerer professed himself a believer, and probably had some conviction of the truth of the Gospel: accordingly he too was baptized, and continued to attend on Philip with the greatest assiduity; being as much astonished by beholding Philip's miracles, as the Samaritans had been by his sorceries: for it is the same word, which is here translated *wondered*, that was before rendered *bewitched*. Perhaps Simon deemed Philip a magician of superior skill and attainments, and hoped to get acquainted with the secret of his art, by which he produced effects, far exceeding all that he himself had been able to perform. (Note, Num. xxii. 5.) "Simon believed also," that this Jesus, who enabled Philip to do these things, was some power superior to any he conversed with." (Whitby.)

V. 14—17. The apostles acted in concert, as a collective body; no one pretending to assume authority over the rest, but every one paying a great regard to the determination of the whole company. Therefore Peter, who was in every thing the most forward to speak and to act,

and John the beloved disciple, were sent by their brethren to confirm the converted Samaritans in the faith. When they came to the city, and saw the effects of Philip's ministry, they, by prayer and imposition of hands, obtained for the converts the Holy Ghost; that is, his miraculous gifts and operations: for though, as believers, they partook of his regenerating, sanctifying, and comforting influences, yet they had not before been favoured with these extraordinary communications. 'Without doubt Peter and John were sent by the other apostles, partly that they might confirm the doctrine of Philip the deacon; and partly that they might establish a Church in that city by apostolical authority.' (Beza.) Some expositors maintain, that none received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, except such as were marked out by God himself to be pastors and teachers: and others seem to think that the whole company of Christians partook of them. This however is unlikely, (1 Cor. xii. 29, 30;) yet it is plain that others, besides the ministers, were thus favoured. It is probable, that many received the gift of the Holy Spirit, by the laying on of the apostles' hands; and that from among these persons the ministers were generally selected, by those who were intrusted with that important concern. (xiv. 23. 2 Tim. ii. 2. Tit. i. 5.) It may be supposed, that Peter and John ordained ministers in this city of the Samaritans. But whether their laying on of hands on some, that they might receive the Holy Spirit, after having prayed for the company in general that they might partake of these benefits, implied previous ordination, seems not clearly determined. The rite of confirmation, as practised by many Christian Churches, has often been spoken of as a continuation of this apostolical imposition of hands, for the confirmation of new converts, by the Holy Spirit thus given to them. But it is far from evident, that this was done universally by the apostles, or those who immediately succeeded them. As, however, miraculous powers, rather than sanctifying grace, were thus conferred, unless such powers were now connected with that rite, the parallel must fail. How far something of this kind, properly regulated and conducted, might be rendered subservient to the edification of young

13 ¶ And when Simon saw, that through laying on of the apostles' hands, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart

is not right in the sight of God.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

persons, descended from Christian parents, is another question: but to advance this observance into a sacrament, and even above a sacrament, (as it is when the Holy Ghost is supposed to be conferred by imposition of hands, and the use of the apostles' words,) puts the subject in a very different light. Doubtless it was at first thus magnified, in order to exalt the episcopal order to whom the administration of it was confined, as if they were intrusted with apostolical authority: but as miracles are out of the question, to follow the apostles in faith, humility, diligence, piety, and self-denial, is the only adequate method of magnifying either the clerical or episcopal office. Assuredly, as this matter is very often conducted, it must be allowed to be an evil; and it ought either to be attended to in another manner, or not at all.

V. 13—24. Many teachers, and probably private Christians wrought miracles, and spake with tongues, "as the Spirit gave them utterance:" but the honour of communicating those gifts, by imposition of hands, and prayer, was, generally at least, restricted to the apostles. When Simon, therefore, saw the effects which followed from the laying on of their hands, he concluded, that they could impart to him a similar power, if they chose. This he supposed would admirably subserve his purposes of obtaining honour and wealth: for by enabling men to speak foreign languages, without the trouble of learning them, and to cure diseases by a word, he should not only carry on a most lucrative trade, but be almost adored as a deity. Judging therefore of the apostles by himself, and seeing that they were poor men, he supposed that they would willingly confer this power on him for a sum of money, and ventured to make this infamous proposal to them. His ambitious mind could not be satisfied with the power of working miracles himself, (though indeed this seems not to have been conferred on him,) but he wanted the unrestricted power of communicating the Holy Spirit, for the same purposes, to whom he pleased. Instead of deeming the lowest place among the people of God too great an honour for one, whose sorcery, impiety, and blasphemy, had been so atrocious; as he certainly would have done, if he had been truly converted, he aspired, with horrible pride and ambition, at equality with the apostles in power and authority; whilst he meant to prostitute the sacred operations of the Holy Spirit to gratify his love of filthy lucre and of human applause, and would have seduced the

apostles to concur in the detestable sacrilege! Whatever miraculous power of discerning men's spirits Peter might possess, and on some occasions exercise, he had no need of it in this case: but perceiving the extreme wickedness and hypocrisy of Simon, he expressed his abhorrence of his money and of his crime, in the most decided manner. Let him take his treasure with him, if he could, into that perdition, to which he was evidently hastening, for Peter would have none of it. This was not a wish that he might perish; but an awful warning that he was in most extreme danger of perdition, which he could not escape, if he proceeded further in his present course. Peter added, that he made such a proposal, because, being utterly ignorant of God and spiritual things, and awfully blinded by Satan, he had blasphemously thought that the free and most precious gift of God's Spirit might be bought and sold by a mercenary traffic. He was therefore evidently destitute of true faith, and had neither part nor lot in the blessings of the Gospel; as his heart was not right in the sight of a holy God, nor was his profession of Christianity sincere. If he would then escape perdition, let him deeply repent of this most horrid wickedness, and pray earnestly to God, that this blasphemous thought of his depraved heart might be pardoned. For though all manner of sin and blasphemy would be forgiven to the true penitent, yet his crime came at least so near to that against the Holy Ghost, which never can be pardoned, that it was a very doubtful case whether God would ever give him true repentance. Indeed, he was, as it were, so plunged and drenched in impiety, as in the bitterest gall, that he must be most loathsome in the sight of God, and exposed to the most dreadful punishment, and he was evidently so bound in the chains of sin and Satan, that the almighty power of God alone could deliver him. (*Marg. Ref.*) Nothing can be more evident, than that the apostle here exhorted an unconverted sinner to repentance and prayer; yea, one whom he feared had committed the unpardonable sin, though he did not look upon his case as absolutely hopeless. When Simon heard this awful warning, denunciation, and exhortation, he desired the apostles to pray for him; not that he might be delivered from his ambition, avarice, and impiety, but that he might be exempted from the punishments which he had mentioned. Perhaps he feared a doom similar to that of Ananias and Sapphira, or he hoped, that by inducing the apostles to conceal his crime, he might

25 And they, ^f when they had testified
and preached the word of the Lord, re-
turned to Jerusalem and preached the
gospel in many ^gvillages of the Samari-
tans.

26 ¶ And ^b the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, ⁱ Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto ^k Gaza, which is ^l desert.

27 And ^hhe arose and went: and
 behold, ^aa man of Ethiopia, ^aan eunuch
 of great authority under Candace ^oqueen
 of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of
 all her treasure, ^pand had ^qcome to
 Jerusalem for to worship,

28 Was returning, ^q and sitting in his chariot, read ^r Esaias the prophet.

29 Then ² the Spirit said unto Philip,
Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

30 And Philip^t ran thither to *him*, and
heard him read the prophet Esaias, and

17 — xxviii 25 Is. i. 1 *Isaiah* Luke iii. 4. iv. 17 — s x 19 xi 12. xiii. 2-4. xvi. 7. xxi. 22, 23 1 Cor. xii. 11. 1 Tim. iv. 1. — 157. Ps. cxix. 32. Ec. ix. 10. John

said, "Understandest thou what thou
readest?"

31 And he said, * How can I, except
some man should guide me? * And he
desired Philip that he would come up
and sit with him. •

32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, ^a He was led ^a as a sheep to the slaughter; ^b and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so ^c opened he not his mouth:

33 In ^dhis humiliation his ^e judgment
was taken away; ^f and who shall declare
his generation? ^g for his life is taken
from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, ^h of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

35 Then Philip ¹ opened his mouth, and ² began at the same scripture, and ³ preached unto him Jesus.

escape infamy, and have an opportunity of carrying on his delusions. For he does not seem to have professed to repent, or to have prayed for himself; but credible historians inform us, that he retained a sort of profession of Christianity, which he distorted by the most horrible and senseless blasphemies; and thus he became the founder of a most multifarious sect of heretics, who were long the trial and the scandal of the Church. From his infamous attempt to bargain for the power of conferring the Holy Spirit, all mercenary contracts for Church-benefits, and other methods of turning the concerns of religion into a lucrative trade, have been called *Simony*: of which there have been, and are, various species, and will be, whilst men continue covetous and ambitious, and verily suppose that "gain is godliness." It is therefore much easier to expose, and declaim against, such impious practices, than to find an effectual remedy for them. 'The sin of Simon struck at the very foundation of the Christian faith; supposing that the apostles and other Christians did their miracles by some higher art of magic than that which he had learned; and so they by the same art could teach others to do the same works for any other end.' (*Whitby*.) 'They who buy and sell sacred things are the successors, not of Simon Peter, but of Simon Magus.' (*Beza*.)

V. 25. The apostles, having executed their commission, set out to return to Jerusalem, and in their journey they preached in many villages of the Samaritans. John was one of those, who formerly wanted to call for fire from heaven to consume certain of that nation; but his Lord had now taught him another lesson. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 26—31. Philip seems to have continued some time among the Samaritans, after the return of the apostles; at length an angel was sent to order him, without delay, to a desert part of the road, between Jerusalem and Gaza.

and he obeyed without demurring, though it was apparently strange to be sent into a desert, without being told what he was to do when he came thither. But just when he arrived at the spot, the appearing of a chariot, passing on the road, began to show for what end he had been sent. In this sat an Ethiopian eunuch, or chief officer, who was the high treasurer of Candace, the queen of Ethiopia in Africa, and possessed great authority in the management of all public concerns. That country seems to have been generally governed by queens, and Candace was a name commonly given to them. Probably this man was a negro. As Cornelius the centurion is supposed to have been the first Gentile convert, it must be concluded, that he was a proselyte to the whole Jewish religion, and not merely a favourer of some of its grand doctrines and precepts. He had, however, taken a very long journey, in order to worship at Jerusalem, where it cannot be supposed that he had heard any thing favourable concerning Jesus, from the priests, scribes, and rulers. Yet his heart was prepared to receive the truth; and, as he rode in his chariot, he employed his time in reading the Scriptures, and that aloud, as it is evident from this narrative, probably that his servants might hear. By an immediate suggestion from the Spirit of God, Philip was ordered to approach the chariot; and, conscious of a divine mission, he, without hesitation, inquired of the eunuch, whether he understood what he read? who, sensible of his disadvantages, and humbly desirous of instruction, was not offended with the question, though proposed by a stranger and a poor man. On the contrary, he allowed that he could not make out the prophet's meaning without an interpreter: and concluding, from Philip's address, attire, or appearance, that he could give him information on the subject, he took him up to him into the chariot.

23 Matt. xliii 19
 31 xxi xv 10.
 xxv 15. Mark
 xlii 14 Luke
 11 John v 39.
 1 Cor xiv 19.
 12 Ps. lvi 18.
 13 Ps. lvi 18.
 14 Ps. lvi 18.
 15 Prov. xxi 23.
 16 Ps. lvi 18.
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 98 Ps. lvi 18.
 99 Ps. lvi 18.
 100 Ps. lvi 18.

ix 26 Zech. xiii. 7. — h Matt ii 2—4 xiii 36. xv 15 — i x. 34 Matt. v. 2 2 Cor vi. 11.
k xviii 28. xvi. 22. Cor. xviii. 23. Luke xiv. 44—47. — liv 20 ix 20 xi 20 xviii
9. 18. xix 13. 1 Cor. i. 23. ii. 2. Eph. iv. 21. 1 Pet. i. 11. 12.

36 And, as they went on *their way*, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, ^m See, *here is water*; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37 And Philip said, ⁿ If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And ^o he answered and said, ^p I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into

the water, both Philip and the eunuch; ^q and he baptized him.

39 And when they were come up out of the water, ^r the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: ^s and he went on his way rejoicing.

40 But Philip was found ^t at Azotus: and passing through, ^u he preached in all the cities, till he came to ^v Cesarea.

Zeph. ix. 6. *Ashdod*. — x. xxi. 8. Luke x. 1, 2. Rom. xv. 19. — y. x. 1. xxiii. 23. — xxv. 4.

V. 32—35. The passage here quoted has been fully considered, (Notes, Is. liii.) The variation between the quotation and the original does not materially alter the meaning. In our Lord's humiliation, his judgment was taken away; for man treated him with the greatest injustice, and God did not immediately appear to plead his cause. The main difficulty which the eunuch found in this Scripture related to the person of whom the sacred writer spake. This gave Philip an opportunity of preaching the Gospel to him to the greatest advantage. We may suppose that he showed him the circumstantial and exact accomplishment of the prediction, in the Person, doctrine, conduct, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus; concerning whom it is most likely that he had heard many disadvantageous reports whilst at Jerusalem.

V. 36—40. The discourse of Philip, no doubt comprising abundant instruction, with animated exhortations and warnings, and the prophecy shown to coincide with its accomplishment in so wonderful a manner, fully convinced the eunuch, through the concurrent teaching of the Holy Spirit, that Jesus was the promised Messiah; and he was made to understand the nature of his kingdom and salvation. Accordingly, he desired to be numbered among his disciples. Doubtless, Philip had shown him the nature of baptism, as the initiatory ordinance of Christianity: when therefore they came to water, he desired to be baptized; and, confessing his full persuasion that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, he was admitted to that ordinance. Men will form their conjectures concerning the mode in which Philip baptized him, according to their different sentiments on that subject. It may, however, be observed, that the original words, rendered *into*, and *out of*, are often translated *to*, and *from*; so that they contain no argument on either side. As soon as the eunuch was baptized, the Spirit of God miraculously conveyed Philip away, so that he saw him no more: but this rather tended to confirm his faith; and he went on his way home, rejoicing, not in his baptism, (for in that Simon Magus might have rejoiced also,) but in Christ, and in his glorious salvation. History informs us, that this eunuch became a preacher of the Gospel in Ethiopia and the adjacent regions, and there founded a flourishing Church, which continued for several ages afterwards; and it is supposed, on very probable grounds, that he was endowed with the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, to qualify him for that service. Philip being conveyed to Azotus, or Ashdod, proceeded to preach in the several cities on the sea-coast, till he came to Cesarea, where he afterwards generally resided.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—3.

The death of eminent ministers and Christians ought to be lamented as a public loss to survivors, though it is their greatest gain; and we should honour their memory, however men may disgrace them, or hate us for our regard to them. But the Lord does not want the services of the most eminent men: if he permit them to be cut off, when they seem scarcely to have begun their work, or if persecution make havoc in the Church, he can over-rule these events to the glory of his name, and the spread of his Gospel. At the same time the most furious enemies cannot touch, or even terrify, those who are most obnoxious to them, unless he give them leave. The glory of his grace often shines forth with peculiar lustre, when we consider the scenes in which his most honoured servants spent their years before their conversion. Who, that witnessed Saul ready to imbrue his hands in the blood of Stephen, and wasting the Church like a beast of prey, would have expected, that he would at length prove the most eminent of all, who ever laboured to promote the Redeemer's cause? Wherever the true believer is driven, he carries with him his knowledge of the Gospel; and in one way or other he will make known the preciousness of Christ in every place: and where a simple desire of doing good influences the heart, it will be found impossible to exclude a man wholly from all opportunity of usefulness. Facts authenticate the truth, when it is faithfully preached; and though miracles be no longer wrought; yet sinners will be converted, and unclean spirits will reluctantly quit possession of those, over whom they have long reigned with uncontrolled sway; and the Gospel will bring with it substantial and permanent joy to every heart, house, parish, or city, in which it is cordially received.

V. 9—14.

Where the ministers of Christ labour with success, the servants of Satan will endeavour to counteract them. The magicians of Egypt appeared to do the same with their enchantments, as Moses did with his rod; yet the men of God shall in due time obtain a decided victory. Human artifice and satanical influence may effect strange things, to astonish and fascinate the deluded multitude; and thus wicked men may give out that they are something extraordinary; and many, from the least to the greatest, may give heed to them, as if they were the great power of God: but when the things concerning the kingdom of

CHAP. IX.

Saul, having sought and obtained letters from the high priest, sets out for Damascus, to persecute the disciples, 1, 2. Drawing near the city, he is surrounded by a light from heaven, and, falling to the earth, hears Jesus expostulating with him, 3—5. He submits, and is led blind to Damascus, where he continues three days without sight or food, 6—9. Ananias is directed in a vision to go to him, by whom he is restored to sight,

and baptized, 10—18. Immediately he preaches in the synagogue, with great boldness, 19—22. The Jews seek to kill him, but he escapes from them, 23—25. He goes to Jerusalem, and is by Barnabas introduced to the apostles, 26—28. Preaching boldly in the name of Jesus, his life is in danger, and he is sent to Tarsus, 29, 30. The Church has rest, and is edified and multiplied, 31. Peter heals Eneas at Lydda, 32—35; and at Joppa raises Tabitha from the dead, 36—43.

God, and the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, are powerfully brought home to men's hearts, the charm will be dissolved, and the truth will be triumphant. Indeed whoever compares the juggles and ambiguous pretences to miracle, or extraordinary operation, that shrink from investigation, and are only calculated to enrich those who are in the secret, which every age produces and fosters, and then detects and despises; with the open, beneficent, incontestable, and disinterested miracles of Christ and his apostles, will easily discern the most manifest difference, or rather the most entire contrariety. The one can only subserve the credit or interest of designing men, and abet delusion, hypocrisy, or immorality; the other evidently tended to promote the best of all causes, even that of truth and holiness: the former have ever sunk into neglect, in proportion as they have been dispassionately examined; the other have been despised by superficial and self-conceited inquirers alone: whilst men of superior wisdom, piety, and diligence, searching deeply into such matters, have always decidedly borne testimony to their reality and importance. But when impostors have exhausted their ingenuity, in devising schemes for deceiving mankind, they sometimes assume a religious profession as their last resource; they pretend to embrace the Gospel; they attend on the ordinances of God; they attach themselves to his ministers, as greatly impressed and affected by their words and works; and thus aspire to a character for sanctity, in subserviency to their selfish designs. Nor should we hastily censure those servants of God, who are thus imposed upon: the Lord alone searches the heart; we know that his grace is sufficient for the vilest of sinners; we ought to hope the best of professed believers, till they prove the contrary; and such men often carry matters very plausibly, till some suitable temptation puts them off their guard, and then they are made manifest in their true character.

V. 14—25.

The abundant unction of the Holy Ghost tends to divest men of their narrow and selfish prejudices, and teaches them to own all as brethren, who receive the word of God, and to desire to impart to them some spiritual good; for in these things there is no room for competition, as no man is impoverished by others being enriched. Yet the carnal mind will convert even spiritual gifts into nutriment

for ostentation, envy, and ambition: selfish hypocrites judge of others by themselves; and covetous men deem a large sum of money an irresistible allurements, and a valuable consideration for the most sacred offices and endowments. Plausible hypocrites are often detected by their desire of pre-eminence, and by devising to render religion subservient to worldly interest. But if men attempt to put filthy lucre in competition with the truths, ordinances, precepts, gifts, and glory of God, we must abhor their favours and bribes, and warn them that they are in the way of perdition. Indeed many high and plausible pretensions are sufficiently detected to be base impostures, by the mercenary spirit of those who boast of them, and then set the pretended gift of God to sale, and dispose of it for ready money. But though simoniacal practices are every where exclaimed against, yet they almost universally insinuate themselves into all things relative to religion. Commonly they, who aspire to be the chief, have neither part nor lot in the matter; for a proud and covetous heart cannot be right in the sight of God. But when we most plainly perceive that men are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, and when we most solemnly warn them of their guilt and danger, we should still exhort them to repent of their wickedness, and to pray to God, if peradventure it may be forgiven. Men often fancy that their thoughts are free, and have no sin in them; yet we see that the thought of the heart may possibly be so atrocious, as to exclude a man from repentance and forgiveness. Many desire others to pray for them, who do not humbly pray for themselves; and many dread punishment, who resolutely proceed to commit the most horrible impieties. The ministers of Christ, however, must testify against such persons, and preach the word of God, in cities, or villages, as they have opportunity, and thus leave the event with the Lord.

V. 26—40.

We should not be discouraged when called to minister in obscure places, or to few hearers: seldom was more good done in the most numerous assembly, than followed Philip's preaching to one stranger in a desert; and implicit obedience and submission become the servants of God. He knows whom he has chosen; and a thousand incidents, apparently casual, form a part of his great plan, for bringing them to the knowledge of his salvation

a 11—13. 19—21.
vii 58. viii 3.
xxii 3, 4. xxvi
9—11. 1 Cor.
xv 9. Gal. i
13. Phil iii. 6.
1 Tim i. 12.

c 14. vii 19 xxii
5. xxvi. 12
Esth. iii. 8—13
xxiii 2—4.
d vi 9. xiii. 14.
15. xxviii. 17—

e 17. xxii 6 xxvi.
12. 13. 1 Cor.
xv. 8.

f Ps. civ. 2.
1 Tim vi 15
Rev xii. 23.
xxii 5.

AND ^aSaul, yet ^bbreathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high-priest,

2 And ^cdesired of him letters to Damascus to ^dthe synagogues, that if he found any ^eof this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

3 And ^eas he journeyed, he came near Damascus; and suddenly there shined round about him ^fa light from heaven :

In this view nothing can be decidedly deemed little, or unimportant, as we know not what vast effects may be connected with it. The Lord will have some of all ranks, nations, and complexions, among his redeemed people, to show the power and largeness of his grace. Where he has implanted a desire after himself, he will in due time satisfy it; though such inquirers may go to places, and among persons, where the most religion might be expected, and yet learn nothing of Jesus, and even come away more prejudiced or bewildered than before. They who seek the truth will improve their leisure time in searching the Scriptures; even when they have but small advantages for understanding it; but, alas! how few of our nobles and ministers of state study that sacred volume, as they ride in their chariots; or willingly take long journeys to inquire after, or worship God! Surely this Ethiopian will rise up in judgment against them and condemn them! Should any one on some special occasion be found reading the Scriptures, and should a minister of Christ, in the most grave, courteous, and modest manner, inquire of him, whether he understood what he read, it is to be feared he would resent the question as impertinence. But humility is teachable, and leads to wisdom: and when we are conscious of our ignorance, and willing to gain information even from an inferior or a stranger, we shall not be left without instruction. In reading the word of God, we should pause to inquire, of whom, and of what, the sacred writers spake. But we should especially employ our thoughts about that meek and holy, that patient and suffering Redeemer, who was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and was dumb as a lamb before the shearer. In his humiliation his judgment and his life were taken away; but he is now exalted at the right hand of the Father: his generation as the Son of God is abundantly declared, the generation of the righteous own him as their spiritual Progenitor, and all judgment is vested in him. Such prophecies are excellent texts, from whence to preach Jesus to sinners; for they at the same time explain and demonstrate his doctrine: and as this is the substance of all our preaching, so we may expect that it will be crowned with peculiar success. If we believe with all our heart that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and profess that faith by such methods as we can, we shall surely be accepted in attending divine ordinances. And when the inquirer after salvation becomes acquainted with Jesus and his

4 And ^ahe fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, ^bSaul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5 And he said, ^cWho art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, ^dI am Jesus whom thou persecutest. ^eIt is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

6 And he, ^atrembling and astonished, said, ^bLord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, ^cArise, and go into the city, ^dand it shall be told thee what thou must do.

precious Gospel, he will go on his way rejoicing to fill up his station in society, from other motives, and in another manner, than before; and thus the conversion of one man may prove a blessing to numbers. The communion of saints on earth, though pleasant, is commonly transient: their different employments and services call them into different places: but under the influence of the same Spirit, they will all serve their generation, and then they will meet before the throne, to part no more, but to join in unceasing and joyful praises to their common Lord and Saviour.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX. V. 1, 2. It is not certainly known in what year Saul was converted; perhaps it might be two or three years after our Lord's ascension. He, however, persisted in persecuting the disciples, for a considerable time, with increasing violence: and he menaced the whole multitude with slaughter and extirpation; as if he could not breathe without venting threatenings against them. Probably the diligence and success of those whom he had driven from Jerusalem, in propagating the Gospel, increased his rage and animosity. Being a volunteer in the service, he devised, as well as executed, designs for exterminating the religion of Jesus: and with this view he proposed to the high priest, (probably Caiaphas,) that he should give him letters from the council and chief priests, to the rulers of the synagogues in Damascus, authorizing them to apprehend those who believed in Jesus, and to send them bound to Jerusalem, to be punished. The sanhedrim had no doubt an ecclesiastical authority over the Jewish synagogues in other countries: yet they could not exercise it, in many respects, without the concurrence of the synagogues themselves, and the connivance of the civil rulers. Damascus had long been the capital city of Syria: it was still very large and populous, and vast numbers of Jews resided there. It does not clearly appear under whose authority it was at this time: but probably the ruling powers were disposed to concur in the execution of the commission granted by the high-priest and council of the Jews. Perhaps some of the persons, who had been converted on the day of Pentecost, or soon after, had first carried the Gospel thither; and they who had been scattered by the preceding persecution, seem to have laboured successfully among the Jews at Damascus.

V. 3—6. The disciples, when they heard of Saul's

xxii. 9. xxv. 12.
14. Dan. x. 7.
Matt. xxiv. 40.
41.

7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

x. 10. xii. 11.
11. Gen. xix. 11.
Ex. iv. 11.
2 Kings vi. 17.
20.

8 And Saul arose from the earth: and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

commission, would certainly unite in prayer for deliverance: but it may be questionable whether one of them thought of that way of deliverance, by which the Lord intended to rescue them. For when Saul drew near to the city, and doubtless pleased himself with the idea of the consternation which he was about to occasion, he was at once surrounded with a dazzling splendour, brighter than that of the meridian sun: and, falling to the ground with terror and amazement, he heard the voice of one calling to him by name repeatedly, and demanding why he persecuted him? Saul had imagined that he was attempting to reduce a company of deluded and obstinate heretics, and that he was doing service to God by his zeal for the law of Moses and the traditions of the elders, against a sect of dangerous innovators: but it now appeared that he was persecuting the "Lord of glory," who considered the cause of the disciples as his own. And why did he this? Had they done him any harm? And was there no evidence that Jesus was the Messiah, after all the miracles wrought by him and his apostles? Saul, astonished by this expostulation, inquired, Who that glorious Lord was, who thus appeared and spake to him? To which it was answered, that he was Jesus, whom he had no doubt often derided and blasphemed, and whom he now persecuted in his disciples. But, as it would be hard, or painful, for a man to kick against the spikes, by which he could only wound himself; thus Saul could only injure and ruin himself, by contending with One, who possessed all power in heaven and earth. On hearing this, Saul was most exceedingly terrified and astonished; probably he dreaded the immediate vengeance of that glorious Lord, whom he had so deeply offended: his guilt was undeniable, his pleas were all silenced; and the concurring influence of the Holy Spirit, enlightening, convincing, and humbling his heart, he submitted without reserve, and only desired to know what the Lord Jesus would have him to do. If mercy could be extended to him, he was prepared to submit to any thing required of him. Accordingly, he was directed to go into the city, and there to wait for further orders. *Kick, &c.* (5.) 'This is a proverbial expression, signifying the damage and hurt they are like to receive, who resist and fight against those who are superior to them, and especially against God. I had rather offer sacrifice to him, than, being a mortal man, be angry with him, and kick against the goads.' (*Euripides, Whittby.*)

V. 7. Saul's attendants, who at first fell to the ground as well as he, having recovered themselves, rose up, but stood speechless with terror and amazement: they indeed heard a voice, though they understood nothing of what was spoken: (*John xii. 28, 29;*) but they saw no man; whence it is probable that Saul in vision saw Jesus in

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

10 1 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; * and to him said the Lord in a vision, * Ananias. And he said, * Behold, I am here, Lord.

11 And the Lord said unto him,

11. 12. 2 Chr. xxxiii. 12. 13.
18. 19. Zach. iv.
16. Jon. iii. 6-8.
xxiii. 12.
xii. 12. x. 17-20.
Num. xii. 6.
Dan. ii. 19.
Gen. xxii. 1.
xxii. 11. Ex. iii. 4.
1 Sam. iii. 4.
8-10. 2 Sam. xv. 25. 15. vi. 6.

human form, as Stephen had done; (*Marg. Ref.*) and we find, from the account which he afterwards repeatedly gave of this transaction, that much more passed between Jesus and him than is here recorded.

V. 8, 9. Saul now arose from the earth: but though his eyes were open, he found that the splendour with which he had been surrounded had blinded him. This effect proved the whole transaction to have been a reality, and not merely an illusion of the imagination. He was therefore led to Damascus; and he entered that city a harmless lamb, though he had set out to journey thither with the fierceness of a tiger! We are not informed whether his attendants were, or were not converted, but this silence seems to indicate that they were not. After his arrival in the city, terror, remorse, anxiety, prayer, and divine visions, so occupied his mind, and his body also was so disordered, that he took no sustenance of any kind for three days; for it pleased the Lord to leave him so long to his reflections, before he sent him any relief, or further instruction. It is impossible to describe what Saul thought, felt, and experienced, during this awful and important interval. There is, however, abundant reason to conclude that the Holy Spirit enlightened his mind at this time, with a just view of the divine law, in its spirituality and excellency; and thus showed him the worthlessness of his pharisaical righteousness, and his exceeding guilt, not only in persecuting the Messiah in his followers, but, also in all his conduct, and the state of his heart. This seems to be intimated in several parts of his epistles; (*Marg. Ref.*) and indeed was essentially necessary to a right understanding of that Gospel, which he was to spend the rest of his life in preaching. With this narrative in view, can we wonder that one, thus saved by grace, and made an apostle, at the very moment when he might most justly have been sent down "quick into hell," should especially delight in expatiating on the divine sovereignty, and on the riches and freeness of the grace of our God and Saviour, in saving his chosen people? The same doctrines are distinctly traced in the other parts of Scripture, and abundantly proved from them: but this apostle, snatched as a brand from the burning, and rejoicing with most grateful exultation in his stupendous deliverance and astonishing felicity, with a noble, but highly rational, enthusiasm, delights in recurring to the source of all his hopes and joys, and in calling on his brethren to ascribe unreservedly all the glory of their salvation to God alone. Were our humiliation equally deep, and our views of the way in which we have been "called out of darkness into marvelous light," as distinct as his, few objections to those doctrines would trouble our minds.

viii. 26. x. 5, 6. a
xi. 13
b. 30. xi. 25. xxi.
35. xxi. 3.
c. 1. 21. v. 22
Deut. iv. 29. 3
Chr. xxxiii. 12.
13. 18. 19. Job
xxiii. 10-28.
18. xxiii. 3-6.
xi. 1. 2. 1. 15
c. 1. 1. 1. 3
Prov. xv. 3. 1. 18
6. 7. Jer. xxi. 12.
15. xxi. 10-12
Job. 11. 1-4
Zech. xii. 10.
Matt. vii. 7, 8.
Luke xi. 9, 10.
xxvii. 7-14
xxiii. 42, 43
John. 10. 19.
d. 10. 17, 18.
e. Ex. iv. 13-19.
1. Sam. xvi. 2.
1. Kings xviii. 5.
-14. Jer. xx. 9.
10. Ez. iii. 14.
Jon. 1. 2, 3.
Matt. x. 16.
f. vii. 3. xxi.
4. 19. 20. xxvi.
10. 11. 1. Tim.
i. 13-15.
g. 2. 3.
h. vii. 59. G.
xi. 13. Rom.
x. 12-14. 1. Cor. i. 2. 2. Tim. ii. 22. -1. Ex. iv. 12-14. Jer. i. 7. Jon. li. 1. 2. -k. xii.
2. Jer. i. 5. John xv. 16. Rom. i. 1. ix. 21-24. Gal. i. 15, 16. 2. Tim. i. 11. ii. 4. 20. 21.
Heb. xvii. 14. -1. xxi. 14. xxi. 21. xxvi. 17-20. Gal. i. 10-15. xi. 13. xv. 15. 16. 20. 21.
1. Cor. xv. 10. Gal. ii. 7. 8. Eph. iii. 7. 8. Col. i. 25-29. 1. Tim. ii. 7.

Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called ^b Saul of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth;

12 And ^a hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias, coming in, and putting ^c his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

13 Then Ananias answered, ^e Lord, I have heard by many of this man, ^f how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:

14 And ^g here he hath authority from the chief priests, to bind all that ^h call on thy name.

15 But the Lord said unto him, ⁱ Go thy way: for he is ^k a chosen vessel unto me, ^j to bear my name before the ^l Gentiles,

and kings, and the children of Israel:

16 For ^m I will shew him how great things he must suffer ⁿ for my name's sake.

17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; ^p and putting his hands on him, said, ^q Brother Saul, ^r the Lord, *even* Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, ^s that thou mightest receive thy sight, ^t and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

18 And ^u immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, ^v and was baptized.

19 And ^w when he had received meat, he was strengthened. ^x Then was Saul

u 2. Cor. iii. 14. v. 6. -xii. 39. 41. viii. 12. 13. 37. 38. xxii. 16. -y. xxi. 12. 1. Sam. xxx. 12. Ec. ix. 7. -2. xxvi. 20. 1. Sm. x. 10-12

V. 10-14. Ananias had been a very devout person according to the law of Moses, and was now become a disciple of Christ, and probably a preacher of the Gospel; though it is not likely that he was one of the seventy disciples. To him the Lord Jesus appeared in a vision, and directed him to go to Saul of Tarsus; who was employed in fervent prayer, and was prepared by a coincident vision for his coming to restore his sight, of which he had lately been bereaved. Saul, having been a strict Pharisee, had doubtless made long, formal, and constant prayers before this: but he now prayed as a sinner for salvation, and probably to that Saviour whom he had before persecuted. It was indeed most wonderful, that he, who before breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of Jesus, should now pour out humble prayers to him; and it was a sufficient proof that he had submitted, and was changed, and therefore ought to be encouraged. Ananias, however, was astonished at hearing the name of Saul in this connexion; he considered the message on which he was sent as replete with peril; and he spake, as if Jesus had been ignorant of Saul's previous conduct, or the intent of his journey to Damascus. "To call on the name of Jesus," is here used as the distinguishing characteristic of a believer. ^a And the unbelieving Jews say of him, preaching Christ in the synagogues, "Is not ^b this he who wasted those who called on that name in Jerusalem?" Thus St. Paul writes to saints,—"under the title of "all that call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in every place;" (1. Cor. i. 2:) and then, in the very next verse, he himself prays, that "grace and peace may be derived on them from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." And he bids Christians follow after peace "with all those that call upon the Lord with a pure heart;" that is, with all believers; it being the same thing to believe in, and to call upon, the name of the Lord Jesus. Hence St. Paul saith, "He that believeth in him shall not be ashamed, because it is written, Whosoever shall

"call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." And hence we learn who that Lord is, whom Ananias bids St. Paul invoke, when he saith "Arise and be baptized, calling upon the name of the Lord," even the Lord Jesus who appeared to him; (xxii. 16;) and what is meant by that phrase, namely, "Profess thy faith, by being baptized in, and by calling on, his name." This was a thing so continually practised by the first Christians, that Pliny mentions it in his epistle to Trajan, telling him, that it was the custom of the Christians to sing a hymn to Christ, as God. For St. Paul, in his thirteen first epistles, prays for "grace and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus;" and St. John in his second epistle doth the same. (Whitby.) Some indeed would render the clause, "are called by thy name;" but the direct meaning of the original, the repetition of the same language in different connexions, and the remarks contained in the quotation just made, are sufficient to show, that this translation is absolutely inadmissible. (Marg. Rel.)

V. 15, 16. Our Lord silenced Ananias's objection, and commanded him to go without delay, as this violent persecutor was a vessel of election, whom the Lord had foreknown and meant to employ; that being filled with the treasure of the Gospel, he might convey his name and doctrine among the nations of the earth, and even to their kings, as well as to his people the Jews: and at the same time he would show him what great things he should suffer for his sake, according to the sufferings which he had inflicted on others. Some think that a particular representation was made in a vision to Saul's mind, of all the various persecutions which he afterwards underwent: at least he had such a discovery made of them, as rendered his subsequent ministry a lively copy of Christ's own example, who foresaw every thing that he was to endure from the very first. He did not, however, fully know the particulars, as many subsequent passages prove. (xx. 22. xxvii. 24. Rom. xv. 23-28.)

27. 28. Gal. i. certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

20 And ^a straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, ^b that he is the Son of God.

21 But all that heard him were ^c amazed, and said, ^d Is not this he that ^e destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

22 But Saul ^f increased the more in strength, ^g and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, ^h proving that this is very Christ.

23 ¶ And after that many days were fulfilled, ⁱ the Jews took counsel to kill him:

24 But ^k their laying await was known of Saul: and they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

25 Then the disciples took him by

night, ^l and let him down by the wall in a basket.

26 And ^m when Saul was come to Jerusalem, ⁿ he assayed to join himself to the disciples: ^o but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

27 But ^p Barnabas took him, and brought him to ^q the apostles, and declared unto them ^r how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, ^s and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

28 And he was with them, ^t coming in and going out at Jerusalem.

29 And ^u he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, ^v and disputed against the ^w Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

30 Which, ^x when the brethren knew, ^y they brought him down to ^z Cesarea, and sent him forth to ^a Tarsus.

V. 17—22. Ananias, thus admonished, obeyed Christ without further hesitation. He no longer considered Saul as a persecutor, but as a disciple; and laying his hands upon him, he called him "Brother Saul;" whilst he informed him, that he was sent to him by the Lord of glory, (even that Jesus, whom he had seen by the way,) that he might miraculously be restored to sight, and then made partaker of the Holy Spirit. "Ananias, who at most is only supposed to be one of the seventy disciples, only laid his hands on him, [that he might receive his sight?]" and—he was replenished with the Holy Ghost, by the immediate gift of Christ; he being an "apostle not of man, nor by man, but by Christ alone." (Gal. i. 1.) (Whitby.) This seems most probable, especially as the conferring of the Holy Spirit, in his miraculous gifts, seems in all cases, previous to that of Cornelius and his friends, to have taken place after baptism. "It is more probable that Ananias did not lay hands on him a second time: as we do not elsewhere find that any but the apostles had the power of conferring the Holy Spirit." (Doddridge.) —At the words of Ananias, however, there fell from the eyes of Saul, as it were, scales, which had occasioned his blindness. These had been an emblem of the benighted state of his soul, amidst the full light of the Gospel; as the recovery of his sight, by the power and mercy of Christ, were of spiritual illumination. When this token of reconciliation had been granted him, he arose, and by receiving baptism professed himself a disciple of the Lord Jesus; and having thus obtained hope and peace, he took proper refreshment, and found his vigour and strength of body restored to him. These extraordinary events being then made known by Ananias to his brethren, Saul was received among them, and continued some time with them at Damascus: but instead of delivering his letters to the synagogues, he boldly went to them, and

preached Christ to the Jews there assembled, showing that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah, and the Son of God. As his character was well known, and the intent of his journey thither; so this change excited the amazement of all men, and probably in many instances gave energy to his testimony, though others were offended by it. But he grew more strong in faith, and more powerful in argument; so that the Jews could by no means answer his proofs, from Scripture, that Jesus was the Messiah, and that all the ancient prophecies had been fulfilled in him. We learn from his own account, that he received his knowledge of the Gospel immediately by revelation from Jesus Christ. (Gal. i. 11, 12.)

V. 23—30. When Saul had preached a while at Damascus, he went into Arabia, and laboured there for a considerable time: and after his return to Damascus, the Jews, enraged at his supposed apostasy, and his pertinacity in preaching Jesus to be the Messiah, took counsel to slay him. (Notes, Gal. i. 15—24.) It seems that Aretas, an Arabian king, had got possession of Damascus at this time; and that the governor appointed by him favoured and abetted these designs against Saul. (2 Cor. xi. 32.) The Jews either preferred this method of proceeding against him, to sending him bound to Jerusalem; or they had been deprived of that power by the change of the government. Saul, however, providentially discovered, and eluded their malice; and he went from thence to Jerusalem. This was three years after his conversion: yet, when he would have joined the Christians there, they questioned his sincerity, and suspected that his enmity to them had only assumed another form; and that he attempted that mischief to them by subtlety, which before had been effected by violence. Damascus was not much above a hundred and fifty miles from Jerusalem; but modern conveniences for a regular correspondence between

31 Then had ^e the churches rest
 throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and
 Samaria, and ^d were edified; ^e and walk-
 ing in the fear of the Lord, ^f and in the
 comfort of the Holy Ghost, ^g were multi-
 plied.

32 ¶ And it came to pass, ^h as Peter
passed throughout all *quarters*, he came
down also to ⁱ the saints which dwelt at
^k Lydda.

2, 3 xxxii. 6, 2
Cor. vii 1. Eph.
v. 21
[John xiv. 16-
18. 1st Cor. v. 5.
viii. 15-17. xiv.
17. xv. 13. Gal.
1. 22, 23. Eph.

34 And Peter said unto him, Eneas,
 n Jesus Christ maketh thee whole : arise,
 and make thy bed. And he arose imme-
 diately.

35 And ° all that dwelt at Lydda and

Saron saw him, and ^r turned to the ⁴² ^{xi} ⁵¹ ^{xi}
Lord. ¹⁹ ^{xxi} ¹⁷ ²⁶
^{Deut} ^{iv} ⁰ ¹
^{xxv} ²⁷ ¹

36 ¶ Now there was at ^a Joppa a certain disciple, named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called * Dorcas : this woman was ^r full of good works and ^a alms-deeds which she did.

37 And it came to pass in those days,
that ^t she was sick, and died: whom,
when they had washed, they laid *her* ^u in
an upper chamber.

38 And inasmuch as ^x Lydda was
nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard
that Peter was there, they sent unto him
two men, ^y desiring *him* that he would
not [†] delay to come to them.

39 Then Peter arose, and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: ^a and all the widows stood by him weeping, ^a and

distant places were then unknown; and some wars in the neighbourhood are supposed to have obstructed the communication. Saul had spent much of his time in Arabia in an obscure situation; and the former perils, alarms, and sufferings, which the disciples had experienced from him, had rendered them unreasonably suspicious of him. But Barnabas, who by some means had obtained fuller information, and had contracted an acquaintance with Saul, introduced him to the apostles Peter and James; (for the other apostles were absent at that time, no doubt preaching the Gospel in different places,) and, having given them a satisfactory account of the manner and the effects of his conversion, he was admitted to communion with the disciples, both public and private, and soon began to preach among them. He especially disputed with the Grecians, whom he had before joined against Stephen; and his arguments so exasperated them, that they purposed to kill him too. He therefore retired to Tarsus, his native city, and preached there and in the adjacent places for some time, till at length Barnabas went, and brought him to Antioch. (xi. 25, 26.) It is supposed that the apostle went by land to Tarsus, and that Cesarea Philippi is meant in the concluding verse. (*Gal. i. 21.*)

V. 31. As this grand instrument of persecution was now become a zealous preacher, and was removed from the reach of his enemies; so the persons concerned seem to have been discouraged; and, other causes perhaps concurring, the persecution was suspended, and the churches were left in peace to settle their concerns; while they improved their opportunity to edify one another in knowledge, faith, and every good thing, and to settle all the concerns of the Church, in order to the regular administration of the divine ordinances. As the disciples generally walked in a reverential regard to the authority and precepts of God, as his upright worshippers, and enjoyed much comfort by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the hope and

peace of the Gospel: so many others were won over to them, and their numbers were continually increased.—‘The edification of the church is the event of persecution provided the Lord be patiently waited for.’ (*Beza*).—The conversion of Saul, from a furious and bitter persecutor, to a zealous, unwearied, and self-denying preacher of the Gospel, and his subsequent labours and sufferings in the cause, for a long course of years, is an undoubted fact, which ought to be accounted for. If his own narrative be admitted, Christianity is without doubt divine, and the only true religion; and they who hesitate to admit his testimony, in its full latitude, are required, in support of their cause, to give some other rational and probable account of such an unparalleled event.

V. 32—35. We have hitherto read but little of the labours of the apostles, except at Jerusalem; though doubtless they incessantly endeavoured to promote the Gospel in every way they could. Here we find that Peter made a circuit through various parts of the land, probably to visit the places where the Gospel had been planted by those whom the late persecution had scattered: and coming to the saints, or believers, at Lydda, a town near the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, he wrought a miracle, in the name of Jesus, and by his power, which was the means of convincing and converting to the faith of Christ the inhabitants in general of that and the adjacent country; so that they believed him to be the Lord, the Messiah, and became his disciples. (*Marg. Ref.*) Saron is supposed to have been a plain, or valley, extending from Cesarea to Joppa; but it is not clear that it is the same which is called Sharon in the Old Testament; as Sharon is spoken of as being in Gilead, east of Jordan. (1 *Chr.* v. 16.) But perhaps more than one district bore this name. The success of the Gospel on this occasion seems to have been exceedingly great; for it is supposed that the neighbourhood was very populous.

showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made ⁹ while she was with them.

10 But Peter ^o put them all forth, and kneeled down ^a and prayed; and turning ^{him} to the body, said, Tabitha, arise. And ¹ she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

41 And ^{he} gave her ^{his} hand, and

lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and ^b widows, ¹ he presented her alive.

42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; ^a and many believed in the Lord.

43 And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with ¹ one Simon a tanner.

h vii. 1. John xix. 13. Pa. cxi. 9. Luke vii. 12. 1 Kx. 12. Gen. xiv. 26. 1 Kings xvii. 23. Lu. e. xvi. 15. x. 35. xi. 21. xix. 17. 18. John xi. 4. 43. xxi. 11.

1 K. 6. 32.

V. 36—43. The words Tabitha, and Dorcas, the one Syriac, and the other Greek, signify ^a *kind* or *doe*; but whether this pious woman was thus named for any particular reason, or not, is uncertain. ¹ The reason why ¹ St. Luke gives this interpretation of her Syriac name ¹ seems to be this, that she being a Grecizing Jewess, ¹ was called by the first name by the Jews, and by the ¹ second among the Greeks. (*Whitby*.) She was a peculiar ornament to the Gospel which she had embraced: for she so abounded in good works and alms-deeds, that her whole life was a continued succession of them; as a tree is full of fruit, when every branch is loaded with it. She not only gave away her substance, but she employed herself in labouring for the poor widows and other believers; so that her death was considered as a public loss. The principal persons therefore among the disciples, having heard of Peter's miracle at Lydda, which was but about six miles from Joppa, sent for him, in hopes that he would be enabled to restore her to life again; which evinced very strong faith, as it does not appear that any apostle had hitherto wrought a miracle of this kind. When he came, and had witnessed the sincere mourning of those, who expressed at once their gratitude and their loss, by showing the garments which Dorcas had made for them, he went alone into the room where she lay, and there prevailed by prayer for her restoration to life. In performing this miracle Peter used an expression, similar to what Jesus had employed on similar occasions; but he had prefaced it with humble prayer upon his knees. He was doubtless assured that this request was granted, before he addressed Dorcas. He said not "I say unto thee, ¹ Arise," in the language of authority, but simply, "Tabitha, arise," as an intimation that Jesus had restored her life: and it should be remembered that there was no witness to the transaction. This miracle was not only a benefit to the admiring thankful company of believers; but it was the means also of converting many to the faith. Peter, therefore, finding an opening for usefulness at Joppa, continued there some time, lodging at the house of one Simon, a tanner, and not with Tabitha; perhaps lest he should *seem* to receive a recompense for the exercise of his miraculous powers. It is remarkable, that there is no instance in scripture of a prophet, or eminent minister of religion, being raised from the dead; (for it does not appear that St. Paul was entirely dead, when he had been stoned at Lystra, xiv. 19, 20;) and but few, of their miraculous recoveries from sickness, though we should perhaps have thought that these were the most proper cases for a divine interposition.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—9.

The power of doing evil hath seldom been adequate to the inclination, even in those who have been most mischievous in the Church or in society: for could persecutors execute their threatenings as readily as they utter them, their very breath would be destructive to the disciples of the Lord. But the restraints providentially imposed upon us, previous to our conversion, prevent much mischief; or the bad history of our past lives would have been still worse. Even when sinners are most eager to execute their rebellious purposes, the Lord sometimes discovers his thoughts of mercy towards them; and thus the extremity of their wickedness illustrates the infinite riches and power of his grace. Whilst we are praying in imminent dangers or overwhelming troubles, we are apt to be discouraged, if we can see no way by which we may be delivered; but he, who in a moment is able to change furious persecutors into zealous preachers, can perform his promises by various methods, of which we have not the least conception.—The manifested light and glory of the divine justice, holiness, and power, would sink the stoutest rebel on earth to despair at once, if it were not accompanied with some indications of mercy and grace: but the Lord sends convictions and terrors to abase men in the dust, that their hearts may be prepared for "peace and joy in believing." Sinners can never have any good reason for their rebellion against God's authority: he hath given them no cause for it, nor can any good come of it: for "it is hard to kick against the pricks." Little do proud Pharisees and despisers of the Gospel imagine, whilst they are venting their contempt and malice against those whom they deem wild enthusiasts, or obstinate sectaries, that they are persecuting the Lord himself, and that he will resent it accordingly. He is One with his disciples, and they with him: he will requite every favour done to them as if done to himself, and whoever injures them touches the pupil of his eye. But opposers of the Gospel do not generally believe that Jesus is the Lord of glory; and that all their hard speeches, and strenuous endeavours against him are a direct attack upon the Lord of Hosts himself. When he shall therefore appear, in far more terrible majesty than he did to Saul of Tarsus, they will tremble with astonishment at the awful danger of that conduct, in which they now fancy there is much merit, or by which they seek renown. When a sinner is brought to a proper sense of his own state, character, and conduct, he will submit without reserve, allowing that he might justly be left to perish; casting himself wholly on the mercy of the divine Saviour,

CHAP. X.

Cornelius, a devout centurion, in Cesarea, being directed by an angel, sends for Peter to instruct him, 1—8; who in the mean time is prepared by a vision, 9—16; and being commanded by the Spirit, attended by certain disciples, accompanies the messengers, 17—23. Cornelius renders undue honour to Peter, who declines

it, 24—26; and shows the occasion of his sending for him, avowing the readiness of himself and friends to receive the word of God from him, 27—33. Peter preaches to them Jesus, and salvation by faith in him, 34—43. The Holy Spirit is poured out on the company, as on the apostles on the day of Pentecost, and Peter commands them to be baptized, 44—48.

and inquiring what he would have him to do. This will thenceforth be the language of his heart and prayers continually: 'What must I do to be saved? In what way must I come? What means shall I use? What method shall I take to obtain assurance of my reconciliation? What return can I make for thy mercy? How shall I recommend thy salvation to others? Shall I enter upon this or the other business, or not? How shall I behave in these circumstances, or manage this matter?' These and such like questions the believer will have daily to propose to the Lord, in faith and prayer; desiring to be taught, inclined, and enabled to know and do his will. When this submission hath been made, the Lord will take the humbled penitent under his direction, and will teach him what he would have him to do: yet he will not show him the whole at once, but gradually, as it becomes necessary: and he uses his servants as instruments in this work, that his appointments may be honoured, and the communion of the saints may be promoted. Nor does he generally bring transgressors to peace and joy in believing, without such previous rebukes, sorrows, and distresses of conscience, as may evince the atrociousness of their crimes, and lay a foundation for their future humility, gratitude, patience, and meekness. Under great remorse of conscience, and when the soul is deeply engaged about eternal things, a man loses his desire after animal recreation; so that fasting in such circumstances is often a matter of course, rather than an imposed duty. But happy are they, who thus sow in tears, that they may reap in joy!

V. 10—22.

Behold the proud Pharisee, or the prouder infidel, prayeth! Behold the licentious profligate, the iniquitous publican, the unmerciful oppressor, or the daring blasphemer, prayeth! What happy tidings are these, when well authenticated, to such as understand the nature and efficacy of prayer; of such prayer, as the humbled sinner presents before a merciful God, for the blessings of a free salvation! Yet even eminent disciples are sometimes staggered at the commands of their gracious Lord, though they express their readiness to obey: and whilst they allow in general the infinite sufficiency of his mercy, they are apt to assign limits to it, in particular instances, according to their several prejudices! But it is the Lord's glory to exceed all our limitations and scanty expectations; and to show that *they* are the chosen vessels of his mercy, whom we were ready to consider as the objects of his most righteous vengeance: nay, that perhaps he intends them to do and suffer more

in his cause, and for his sake, than those who stand highest in our estimation. This was the case with him, who had done so much evil to the saints of the Lord Jesus at Jerusalem, and was preparing to do all he could to those who called on his name at Damascus; and in more obscure instances the same is taking place continually. He expects implicit obedience from his servants: all their objections arise from unbelief; and when they are in a right frame, they would go even into the lion's den, should their obedience require it, assured that he will be with them, to support or deliver them. Converting grace renders believers the children of the same Father, abolishes their former distinctions, and terminates their enmities: and when the bitterest foe, or the vilest malefactor, becomes a real disciple, we are required to own and to love him as a brother, without any upbraidings, prejudice, or resentment; and we should rejoice to be useful to him, either in his temporal or spiritual concerns. The efficacious teaching of the Holy Ghost causes the scales of ignorance, prejudice, and pride, to fall from the eyes of the understanding, which before excluded the clear light of the Gospel: then the sinner receives his sight, and professes the faith which once he despised: then he passes from the kingdom of Satan to that of God; and, being a new creature, he lives in a new element, and joins himself to new companions: and as he hath opportunity and ability, he endeavours to recommend Jesus, the anointed Saviour, and the Son of God, to the attention of his former associates in iniquity or infidelity.

V. 23—31.

Whilst many, who witness the effects of the Gospel are amazed, but few in comparison are effectually convinced by them. Even Saul's conversion, though it is at this day a real demonstration of the truth of Christianity, a fact that can neither be doubted, nor accounted for upon any other principle, even when it first took place, and when it concurred with his convincing arguments and most stupendous miracles, could not of itself effect the conversion of one enemy to the Gospel; for nothing can produce true faith, but that power which new creates the heart. Thus the Jews both at Damascus and Jerusalem rejected Saul's unexceptionable testimony, and sought to kill him, as he had sought the destruction of those that had been Christians before him! Believers are apt to carry their suspicions too far, in respect of those against whom they have imbibed strong prejudices, and from whom they have received great injuries. Indeed the world is so

xviii. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945. 946. 947. 948. 949. 950. 951. 952. 953. 954. 955. 956. 957. 958. 959. 960. 961. 962. 963. 964. 965. 966. 967. 968. 969. 970. 971. 972. 973. 974. 975. 976. 977. 978. 979. 980. 981. 982. 983. 984. 985. 986. 987. 988. 989. 990. 991. 992. 993. 994. 995. 996. 997. 998. 999. 1000.

THERE was a certain man ^a in Cesarea, called Cornelius, ^b a centurion of the band called the ^c Italian band, ^d 2 ^e A devout man, ^f and one that

feared God ^g with all his house, ^h which gave much alms to the people, ⁱ and prayed to God alway.

full of deceit, and the visible Church of hypocrisy, that it is hard for us to be sufficiently cautious, without verging to the extreme. The Lord, however, will clear up the characters of the upright; he will bring them acquainted with his people, and give them opportunities of bearing testimony to his truth, perhaps before those with whom they once concurred in enmity and opposition to it. He sees good to prove his Churches by tribulations and persecutions; but by taking off their enemies, converting some and dismaying others, or finding them other work, he will give seasons of rest and peace; in which we should diligently edify ourselves, and each other, that we may be prepared for future trials, in case they should be allotted us. When believers walk conscientiously in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they appear to be an excellent and happy people, and are generally multiplied; and it behooves us to watch against dejection or melancholy, as much as against known sin; as it tends to prejudice the minds of unbelievers against the truth, and to render them afraid of it.

V. 32—43.

The unwearied labours of the primitive preachers of the Gospel should be studied and imitated, by all their successors in the ministry: and the displays of the power and grace of Christ, should encourage us in all our difficulties. He can heal our bodies, or our souls, of the most inveterate maladies, whenever he pleases: his long delays to help us do not prove that he never intends it; and he can make our tedious afflictions or temptations, and our merciful deliverances, the means of saving the souls of those around us. Whilst we live upon the fulness of Christ for our whole salvation, we ourselves should desire to be full of good works, for the honour of his name and the benefit of his saints. Then they who go before us will be witnesses in heaven, and they who survive us will testify on earth, to the reality of our faith and love. Many seem to think that none can glorify Christ, or help to spread his Gospel, except ministers; but such persons as Tabitha are as much wanted, and are as useful in their places, even as able faithful preachers: for whilst the latter proclaim the truths of the Gospel by their word, the other substantiate, illustrate, and demonstrate the excellency of them in their lives. How mean then is the grovelling ambition of those numerous females, who aspire to no greater distinction than that of external decoration and accomplishment, and who waste their lives in trifling pursuits, when their multiplied charities and labours of love might have rendered them, at less expense of time and treasure, a blessing to numbers, and an ornament to Christianity! When such triflers die, all dies with them, and their loss is not much felt or lamented; whilst even such as have had little in their power, but have laboured, working with their own hands, that they might relieve the poor and needy, will be substantially useful through life, and sin-

cerely lamented at their death; and their works will follow them, and be graciously rewarded in heaven. We cannot expect, nor should we desire, the return to life of those who have thus served their generation, and are fallen asleep: yet the presence, conversation, and prayers of faithful ministers may be a benefit to the survivors; and they should ever be ready to embrace such opportunities of comforting the mourners. The Lord can make up every loss; he over-rules every event for the good of those who trust in him, and for the glory of his own name: and unostentatious piety, disinterested diligence, and indifference about outward accommodations, should mark the whole conduct of those, who preach the Gospel of God our Saviour.

NOTES.

CHAP. X. V. 1, 2. Hitherto none had been admitted by baptism into the Christian Church, but Jews, Samaritans, and Proselytes; who were all circumcised persons, and who afterwards observed the ceremonial law: but the time was now come, when the Gentiles were to be openly made partakers of all the privileges of God's people, without being proselyted to Judaism, either before or after their conversion to Christianity. The character of the person whom God was pleased to select, as the first-fruits of this harvest from among the Gentiles, was suited, (as much as any thing could be,) to abate the prejudice of the Jewish converts against the alteration. Cornelius was a centurion, or the commander of a hundred men, in the Italian band or cohort of Roman soldiers which attended the governor, who now generally resided at Cesarea. Many, with Grotius, have explained this, as if the meaning were that Cornelius was a centurion of one of the cohorts belonging to the Italian legion. But I refer the reader to the many learned and judicious things which Mr. Biscoe has said, (*Boyle's Lectures*), to show that the Italian legion did not exist at this time. I think it exceedingly probable, that this was a cohort different from any of the legionary ones; and consequently that Luke has here expressed himself with his usual accuracy; and that the mistake lies, as it generally does, in those who think they have learning enough to correct him. It is probable that this was called the Italian cohort, because most of the soldiers belonging to it were Italians. (*Doddridge*.) It may be supposed that Cornelius, if a native of Italy, would think it a trial, to be sent so far from his country and connexions. But in Judea he had become acquainted with the true God, and, renouncing idolatry, he worshipped him with reverence and obedient attention. He had taught his family to do the same, and was a liberal friend to the poor Jews among whom he resided; he was constant in his devotions, both with his family, and in secret: and he set apart seasons for fasting and prayer, probably to seek further directions from God respecting his truth and will. He was in some measure acquainted with the Scriptures, and the promises of a

1 Job iv. 15, 16.
 2 Dan ix. 20, 21.
 3 30. iii. 1. Matt.
 4 xxvi. 46. Luke
 5 xxi. 41-46.
 6 1v. 19. 21. 22. xii.
 7-11 xxvii. 23.
 8 Luke i. 11. 12.
 9 10, 11. 13. Heb.
 10 2. 14.
 11 mis. 4. xxviii.
 12 17. 18. xiv. 4.
 13 Dan. 11.
 14 Luke i. 12. 29.
 15 xxiv. 5.
 16 ois. 5, 6. xxi. 10.
 17 1 Sam. 10.
 18 p. 31. 2 Chr. vi. 33.
 19 xxvii. 27. Ps.
 20 xxi. 2. 16. xlii.
 21 26. Nal. iii. 16.
 22 Luke 13. Phil.
 23 iv. 6.
 24 Phil. iv. 18.
 25 Heb. vi. 10. xiii. 16. — r 32. ix. 38. xv. 7. xvi. 9. — s Mark iii. 16. John i. 42.

Messiah; though it may be questioned whether he had learned to rely on him, as a spiritual Redeemer that was to come. Many writers are very full and exact about two sorts of proselytes to the Jewish religion; and others argue against that distinction: but the nature of the case, and the facts recorded in Scripture, render it evident that some of the Gentiles were circumcised, professed obedience to the whole Mosaic law, and were completely incorporated among the native Jews; and that others became worshippers of the true God, and professed obedience to the moral precepts, who were not circumcised, nor observant of the ceremonial law. Of this latter description Cornelius was; and therefore considered entirely as a Gentile, though of good report among the Jews. 'The Jews' accounted them unclean, as well as the other Gentiles:— 'yet they deemed the alms they gave to the Jews clean; and because Cornelius was free in giving to the Jews of 'Cesarea, he was a man of good report among them all.' (*Whitby*.) The promised Saviour, however, was now come, and the way of a sinner's salvation by him was openly preached: it was therefore proper, that all who feared God should explicitly believe in him, and profess themselves his disciples. There was evidently a preparation in the heart of Cornelius for the reception of the Gospel; he had doubtless a true faith in the word of God, as far as he understood it, though he had not an explicit faith in Christ. This preparation and faith were the fruits of the regenerating Spirit of God, which was given to him through the mediation of Jesus, even before he knew him; as indeed is the case with every man, when "God, "who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith 'he "loved him, even when dead in sins," at first "quickens "him together with Christ." Had it been possible for Cornelius, in this state of mind, to have refused the salvation of Christ when proposed to him, he could not have been saved by his works; but this could not be, for God had disposed him to welcome the Gospel, because he intended to call him to believe it; so that he could neither be saved without faith in Christ, nor could he perish through want of it. It is mere trifling to inquire, as many have done, what his state would have been, had he died after his prayers were heard, and before he had believed in Christ; for it goes upon the absurd supposition of the Lord's beginning a work, and not bringing it to the intended completion. It is an universal rule, that whatever is from God, of a spiritual and gracious nature, will for Christ's sake be accepted by him: but it may be doubted whether

6 He lodgeth with 'one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side: 'he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called 'two of his household servants, 'and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;

8 And when he had declared all these things unto them, 'he sent them to Joppa.

he ever communicates regenerating grace, where he has not given, or does not mean to send, some measure of the light of his word: though it doth not behoove us to limit his mercy; nor can we tell how small a portion of divine truth may be the seed, or food, of divine life in the soul. This we may know certainly, that no regenerate man will finally reject the Gospel when proposed to him. Many objections and reasonings, and much perplexity on this subject, among persons of contrary systems, seem to arise from inattention to this truth, that *nothing spiritually good, or acceptable to God, can be produced from the heart of a fallen creature, except by the regenerating Spirit of Christ*: where that is communicated, all things necessary to salvation will in due time follow; but when, or in what order, cannot be previously ascertained. But many things, good in the estimation of man, and many specious appearances of evangelical religion, are as distinct from *spirituality, or the choice and love of the holy excellency of God and heavenly things*, as polished brass in its highest perfection is different from pure gold. Perhaps these observations may assist the reader in understanding this interesting chapter, which cannot easily be made to accord with the exactness of systematical writers on these subjects.

V. 3—8. Cornelius, influenced by divine grace, was acting conscientiously, and waiting for clearer discoveries of the will of God: and as he was keeping a solemn fast, and prayed at the hour when the evening-sacrifice was offered, (as one of the stated hours of prayer,) he saw, in a vision, an angel in human form and shining garments, who addressed him by name as he entered his apartment. Being alarmed at the vision, (as probably his doors were fastened,) and aware that this was a heavenly visitant, he desired, in the language of reverence, to know what was the meaning of his coming? The angel then assured him, that his alms and prayers were come up before God with acceptance; who was, as it were, reminded by them of his promises and purposes to do him good. (*Marg. Ref.*) He therefore was come, not to be his instructor, but to direct him to send for Peter to Joppa, who would show to him the way of truth and salvation, about which he so earnestly inquired. Thus the angel left it to the apostle to preach the Gospel to Cornelius, that the sacred ministry might be honoured, and that he might become acquainted with the disciples of Christ for his future benefit. Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, by whose preaching the foundation of the church of converted Jews was laid, on

9 ¶ On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, ^a Peter went up upon the house-top to pray, about ^b the sixth hour.

10 And ^c he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, ^d he fell into a trance;

11 And ^e saw heaven opened, ^f and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth;

12 Wherein ^g were all manner of four

footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

13 And there came a voice to him, ^h Rise, Peter, kill, and eat;

14 But Peter said, ⁱ Not so, Lord; ^j for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

15 And the voice ^k spake unto him again the second time, ^l What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

16 This was done ^m thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

the day of Pentecost, was chosen on this occasion, rather than Paul the intended apostle of the Gentiles; probably that the unprecedented admission of uncircumcised persons into the Church might give as little offence to the Jewish converts as possible. Philip, the evangelist, seems to have been at Cesarea at this time; yet it did not please God to employ him in the case of Cornelius, as he had done in that of the Ethiopian treasurer. Cornelius receiving these directions, and having pious servants and attendants, through the influence of his example and instructions, immediately sent three messengers to Joppa, to inquire for a man, of whom he had probably never heard, before the angel made him known to him.

V. 9-16. 'Peter, after he had received the Holy Spirit, needed to make daily proficiency in the knowledge of the benefit of Christ.' (Beza.) (Note, iii. 19-21.) The prejudices of Peter were so strong against uncircumcised persons, that the report of Cornelius's vision would not have satisfied his mind as to the propriety of going to him, unless the Lord had otherwise prepared him for the service. When the messengers drew near to Joppa, Peter had retired for prayer to some convenient solitude, which he had upon the top of the house; it being then about noon; for, like David and Daniel, he prayed at least three times a day. Whilst he was there he became uncommonly hungry, and would gladly have eaten; but before his ordinary repast was ready, he fell into a trance, or *ecstasy*; in which his senses were closed to external objects, but invisible things were presented to his mind, as if he saw them with his eyes. In this state there appeared to him a great vessel, resembling a vast sheet or wrapper, of which the four corners were fastened together; this seemed to come down from heaven to the earth; and upon further observing it, he found that it contained all kinds of living creatures. At the same time he heard a voice directing him to satisfy his hunger, by immediately killing and eating whatever he chose. To this he decidedly objected, though he supposed it to be the voice of the Lord; as he had always observed the ceremonial-law, in this matter, with the most scrupulous exactness. To this objection, it was replied, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common," or polluted. To impress his mind more deeply, and to show the certainty of the inference to be drawn from it, the transaction was thrice repeated, and then the whole vision disappeared. The same law, which established the distinction between clean

and unclean meats, had also marked that between Jews and Gentiles, and restricted the intercourse between them; but the pride and bigotry of the Jews had carried the separation further than the law required; and even produced a contempt of the Gentiles, however friendly or conscientious. The law also concerning the distinction of meats and of animals had both been an emblem of, and a means of preserving, the distinction between clean and unclean persons. (Notes, Lev. xi.) 'Being thus separated by this precept,' (concerning clean and unclean meats,) 'from all familiar converse with other nations, hence they came to look on them, who did not use this abstinence, as unclean; because they did freely eat of those things which the law made unclean to them; and to say the unclean beasts did signify the people of the world.' Call not thou common. "Do not thou pollute." (Gr.) 'It was the priests' office, in case of leprosy, and other matters of a like nature, to pronounce the thing or person under examination clean or unclean. In the Hebrew it is thus expressed, "The priest shall cleanse." 'The priest shall pollute him,' "Do not, thou pronounce that unclean, which God hath cleansed, (Whitby.) To inform a Jew, that God had cleansed those animals that had been declared unclean, and that they were no longer to be deemed common, or rejected as such, was in fact to announce the abrogation of the Mosaic law, and the introduction of another and more enlarged dispensation: and it plainly intimated, that uncircumcised Gentiles, whom God had cleansed by faith and grace, were to be received into the Church, without regard to the ceremonial law, or to their uncleanness according to it.—This great vessel might therefore signify the Christian Church, as living under the new dispensation of the covenant of grace, the origin of which is from heaven, though its place is on earth. Its security, by the promise, oath, and covenant of God, and the engagements of his unchangeable wisdom, power, truth, and love, may also be intimated by the vessel being knit at the four corners. The animals of various species may represent sinners of every nation, description, and previous character, as gathered into the Church, by the preaching of the Gospel, and by the faith of the operation of God: (Note, Is. xi. 6-9) and the voice, repeatedly addressing Peter, evidently meant, that he should thenceforth associate with converts to Christ from among the Gentiles, and make no distinction between them and the Jewish disciples, for

h 10. Jer. xxv. 2-6. John xv. 1-2. Gen. ix. 18. Ex. x. 11. Matt. xvi. 22. xxv. 9. Luke 13. 12. Lev. xi. xx. 25. Deut. xiv. 21. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

9 ii. 12. v. 21.
xxx. 20 John
xiii. 12. 1 Pet. i.
7-16.

17 ¶ Now ^h while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean; behold, ^o the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,

p. 5, xi. 11.

18 And called, ^p and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

q viii. 29 xi. 12.
xiii. 2. xvi. 6, 7.
xvii. 4. John
xvi. 12. 1 Cor.
xv. 11. 1 Tim.
iv. 1.

19 While Peter thought on the vision, ^q the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

r viii. 29 xi. 12.
xiii. 2. xvi. 6, 7.
xvii. 4. John
xvi. 12. 1 Cor.
xv. 11. 1 Tim.
iv. 1.

20 Arise, therefore, ^r and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing; ^s for I have sent them.

s xii. 12. xiii. 1.
xv. 11. 1 Tim.
iv. 1.

21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, ^t Behold, I am he whom ye seek: ^u what is the cause wherefore ye are come?

t xii. 12. xiii. 1.
xv. 11. 1 Tim.
iv. 1.

22 And they said, ^v Cornelius the centurion, ^v a just man, and one that feareth God, and ^w of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, ^x and to hear words of thee.

u xii. 12. xiii. 1.
xv. 11. 1 Tim.
iv. 1.

23 Then called he them in, ^b and lodged them. And ^c on the morrow Peter went away with them, ^d and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

v xii. 12. xiii. 1.
xv. 11. 1 Tim.
iv. 1.

24 ¶ And ^e the morrow after, they en-

tered into Cesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, ^f and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, ^g and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.

26 But Peter took him up, saying, ^h Stand up; I myself also am a man.

27 And as he talked with him, he went in, ⁱ and found many that were come together.

28 And he said unto them, Ye know how ^k that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew, to keep company, or come unto one of another nation: ^l but God hath shewed me, that I should not call any man common or unclean.

29 Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, ^m as soon as I was sent for: ⁿ I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?

30 And Cornelius said, ^o Four days ago ^p I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, ^q and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

31 And said, Cornelius, ^r thy prayer is heard, and thine alms ^s are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

32 Send ^t therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; ^u he is lodged in the house of one Simon a

11 ii. 12. v. 21.
xxx. 20 John
xiii. 12. 1 Pet. i.
7-16.
p. 5, xi. 11.
q viii. 29 xi. 12.
xiii. 2. xvi. 6, 7.
xvii. 4. John
xvi. 12. 1 Cor.
xv. 11. 1 Tim.
iv. 1.
r viii. 29 xi. 12.
xiii. 2. xvi. 6, 7.
xvii. 4. John
xvi. 12. 1 Cor.
xv. 11. 1 Tim.
iv. 1.
s xii. 12. xiii. 1.
xv. 11. 1 Tim.
iv. 1.
t xii. 12. xiii. 1.
xv. 11. 1 Tim.
iv. 1.
u xii. 12. xiii. 1.
xv. 11. 1 Tim.
iv. 1.
v xii. 12. xiii. 1.
xv. 11. 1 Tim.
iv. 1.
w xii. 12. xiii. 1.
xv. 11. 1 Tim.
iv. 1.
x xii. 12. xiii. 1.
xv. 11. 1 Tim.
iv. 1.
y xii. 12. xiii. 1.
xv. 11. 1 Tim.
iv. 1.

m 19. 28 p. xxi. 15.
n 1. 1 Pet. iii. 15.
o 21.

p 7-9. 23, 24.
q 3. Ezra ix. 4, 5.
Neh. ix. 1-3.
Dan. ix. 20, 21.

r 10. Matt. xxviii. 3. Mark xvi. 7. Luke xxiv. 4.

s 1. xxxviii. 5. Dan. ix. 23. 12. Luke 1. 12. 13. s. Sc. on. 4. Lev. ii. 9. v. 12. Phil. iv. 10. Heb. vi. 8. viii. 3, 4. 13-3.

God had cleansed them; and that he should preach to the Gentiles, even as to the Jews, for God intended to cleanse them also. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 17—23. Peter did not readily understand the import of this vision; though he knew that it contained some weighty instruction, which he diligently applied his mind to discover. Whilst he was thus employed, the messengers of Cornelius arrived and inquired for him; but to satisfy his mind more fully, in a case that involved the abolition of the ritual law, which God himself had given Israel, this fact was immediately revealed to him; and he was ordered to go with the messengers without scruple or hesitation. God had sent these messengers, by means of his angel, who appeared to Cornelius; but ^q the Spirit said to Peter, I have sent them; ^r this is the language of Deity and personality. Accordingly, Peter, having heard the report of the messengers concerning Cornelius's character and vision, hospitably entertained them till the next day, and then went with them. But he took with him some of the believers who dwelt at Joppa, that they might witness, and be ready to attest, the whole of what passed on this unprecedented occasion.

V. 24—26. Cornelius, expecting a satisfactory discovery of the divine will from Peter, had collected his

friends, (who seem to have been previously disposed to receive instruction even as he was,) that they might share the benefit. Peter had been made known to him in so extraordinary a manner, that he seems to have supposed he was something more than man; perhaps he thought that he was the Messiah, of whom he had read such glorious things. He, however, prostrated himself before the apostle, and rendered him such homage, as Peter deemed improper to be received by any one, who was but a mere man, like himself, and therefore he resolutely rejected it; yet Jesus continually accepted of the very same. (*Matt. ix. 18. Mark v. 22.*) 'If the worship intended ^s and given by Cornelius was religious, Peter declares ^t such worship was not to be given to a mere man; ^u if it was only civil worship, he, who thought it not ^v fit to receive that, would much less have received religious worship.' (*Whitby.*) 'Religious worship belongs to God alone; but civil and immoderate must ^w not be rendered even to apostles, when present, much ^x less when absent and dead; and much less to their ^y tombs.' 'If Cornelius had desired to kiss Peter's toe, ^z would Peter have allowed him? Yet, truly, it is Peter's ^a vicegerent, who requires kings to kiss his slipper.' (*Beza.*)

Uxxii. 22. Sec. on.
Luke xxiv. 25
—27. 44—46.
John i. 45
39. 10 1 Pet. i.
11 Rev. xix. 10
xiii. 10. 16. 10—
12. John xx.
21. Rom. v. 1
v. 23 Heb. xiii.
59. xiii. 30, 39. xv.
9. xxi. 18
Mark xvi. 15.
John x. 24.
Rom. viii. 1.
33 x. 11 Gal.
ii. 22. Eph. i.
7. Col. i. 14
2. ii. 4. iv. 81.
vii. 15—17. xi. 15. xix. 6
Eph. ii. 11, 12. iii. 5—8. Col. iii. 13, 14.

43 To ^a him give all the prophets witness, that ^{*} through his name, ^y whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

44 ¶ While Peter yet spake these words, ^z the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45 And ^a they of the circumcision which believed, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on ^b the

Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

46 For they heard them ^c speak with ^e tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

47 Can ^d any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

48 And ^e he commanded them to be baptized, ^f in the name of the Lord. ^g Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

V. 36—43. The apostle next proceeded to state the substance of his message. This, indeed, would scarcely have been necessary, if Cornelius had been so accepted for his good works, as not to need the righteousness and atonement of Christ; or if, as some argue, every man may be saved by his own religion, if he be sincere in it. But his prayers for instruction being accompanied by obedience, according to his present light, were accepted; and in consequence the only way of salvation was made known unto him, and his heart was prepared to welcome it. Peter, in calling the attention of the company to his subject, observed, that they must have known something of the preaching of Jesus the Nazarene, and of the rumours, which had been circulated concerning him; though their information had been imperfect, confused, and unfavourable. - Now this report, properly understood, contained that very instruction which God had sent him to deliver; even the word, which he had some time before sent to the Jews preaching reconciliation to himself, and peace, with each other, by this Jesus, who was the promised Messiah, the anointed Saviour and King of Israel, yea, the Lord of all men, whether Jews or Gentiles, of all creatures, whether men or angels, and of all worlds, even of all things in heaven, earth, or hell; both in respect of his divine nature, as the incarnate Son of God, and as the Mediator between God and man, the Law-giver, Governor, and Judge of all. (*Marg. Ref.*) The apostle declared that he came to confirm that doctrine, which they knew had been published throughout all Judea, though it was first more stately preached in Galilee, after John had prepared the way for it by his ministry and baptism. This doctrine implied, that God had anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit, in an evident manner, at his baptism, when he had declared him to be his “beloved Son, in whom he was well “pleased;” and had endued him as man with that divine power, which he exercised “in going about doing good,” and performing all kinds of miraculous cures; especially delivering those who were oppressed by evil spirits, as an emblem of his rescuing sinners from the yoke and service of Satan! for God was evidently with him, as appeared by the authority and beneficence of his miracles. To this, Peter and the other apostles were appointed to bear witness, as they had been his constant attendants, and the spectators of these interesting scenes; till at length the Jewish rulers, hating the holy doctrine, and envying the reputation of Jesus, had seized him, and condemned him to death as a deceiver, and had procured the execution of their sentence from Pilate; so that he had been ignomi-

niously and cruelly crucified as a malefactor. But though it had pleased God, for wise purposes, to permit their malice to succeed thus far, yet he had raised him from the dead, and shown him openly after his resurrection; not indeed to all the people, whose conduct had rendered them unworthy of such a favour; for that method would not have been so convincing and satisfactory to all those, in every age and nation, who were concerned in this event: (*Note, John xx. 26—29*;) but to a competent number of witnesses, whom he had before chosen for that purpose; even to the twelve apostles, and many others, who had seen, conversed, eaten, and drunk with him, after he arose from the dead. He had also commanded them to preach these things to mankind, and to assure them, that he, who was then proposed to them as a Saviour, was ordained by God to be the Judge of those who should, at the last day, be found living on earth, and of the innumerable multitudes which should then be raised from the dead. These things indeed were no other than what had been predicted in the Scriptures, with which Cornelius and his friends were become in some measure acquainted; and in due time they would see, that the several particulars relating to the person, character, miracles, doctrine, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, were accomplishments of ancient prophecies; and that all the prophets, in one way or other, bare witness to him, and directed mankind to expect acceptance through his righteousness and sacrifice; so that whosoever of any nation, or description, believed in him, should receive a free and complete remission of all his sins. (*Marg. Ref.*) We must suppose that this is only an abstract of Peter's discourse; and as he was interrupted in it by the descent of the Holy Ghost, so we need not wonder that various points of Christian doctrine are not explicitly stated in it; for they were left to be communicated afterwards, and by degrees.

V. 44—48. (xi. 15.) The descent of the Holy Spirit on this occasion seems not to have been accompanied by the same circumstances as on the day of Pentecost; but the effects were evident, and similar to those which were then produced. The Gentile converts were immediately enabled to speak in languages which they had not previously learned; and to magnify God, and celebrate, with adoring gratitude, the glory displayed in the work of redemption. As they were thus undeniably baptized with the Holy Spirit, not only by his sanctifying influences, but by his miraculous gifts also, Peter justly concluded, that it would be absurd to refuse them the baptism of water; and when none of his companions could say any

CHAP. XI.

Peter is blamed by those of the circumcision, for going among the Gentiles, 1—3.

thing against it, he ordered the ordinance to be administered to them. *Forbid water, &c.* "These words contain a plain and convincing demonstration of the falsehood of the Quakers' doctrine, that water-baptism is unnecessary to them, who have received the inward baptism of the Spirit: since the apostle here not only declares, that water-baptism ought therefore to be administered to these persons, because they had already been baptized with the Holy Ghost, but also commands them to be baptized upon that account." (*Whitby.*) It was not necessary for the sacred historian, on such occasions, to repeat the *appointed form* of Christian baptism; and, therefore, the special confession of Jesus, as the Messiah, the Son of God, is alone noticed. But there seems no ground to doubt, but that the form also was adhered to. Some learned men *conjecture*, that when Jews, who had before believed in the Father and in the Holy Spirit, were baptized, it was only in the name of the Son; but that the Gentile converts were baptized "into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." This, however, is merely *conjecture*, and very improbable; for not the least trace of it is found in Scripture; nor any difference marked, between the *form* of baptizing Jewish and Gentile converts. It is rather taken for granted, that the apostles and primitive teachers adhered to the instruction of their Lord, just before his ascension; and it was therefore needless to mention that circumstance in the narrative. It is not said that the brethren who accompanied Peter were pastors; but it is probable that some of them were. There had been Christians at Joppa for a considerable time; and either they, who first collected a Church in that city, appointed pastors, or Peter, when he went thither, would "set in order this which was wanting." Now it is most natural to suppose, that on so interesting an occasion Peter would take with him, as witnesses, some of the pastors of the Church, and not exclusively private Christians. Ananias is not said to have been a minister, or pastor; yet one can hardly doubt but that he was.—The apostle, however, seems to have devolved the service of baptizing the Gentile converts on his attendants; perhaps for the same reasons which the apostle Paul assigned, on an occasion in some respects similar. (*Marg. Ref.*)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—3.

Pure and undefiled religion is sometimes found where it might least have been expected; (*Note, &c. Matt. viii. 5—13*); and the vessels of mercy are often brought acquainted with God by means, of which, at the time, they know not the tendency, and which perhaps thwart their inclinations and disappoint their schemes of future life. The grace of God teaches men to "worship him with reverence and godly fear," to serve him conscientiously, to unite justice and charity, and to pray with constancy and perseverance; it leads men to order their households in

He satisfies them, by relating the whole transaction; and they glorify God, 4—

18. The Gospel having spread to Phoenice, Cyprus, and Antioch, 19—21.

the fear of God; and commonly they become instrumental to the good of those around them. This Roman soldier was more like a son of Abraham, even before he became a Christian, than most of that patriarch's lineal descendants were; and doubtless he will rise up in judgment against numbers of nominal Christians, and even professors of evangelical truth. Yet all this diligence, liberality, equity, piety, and self-denial, could not have saved him, without the atonement of Christ; even he must be accepted, and admitted into heaven in the same way with Saul the persecutor, with the converted jailor, and the thief upon the cross; "that no flesh should glory in the presence of God." What then will become of those, who, without one moiety, or even one tenth, of the external appearance of his piety and charity, presume that they shall go to heaven on the score of their good works, and reject the way of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ? But where these things are genuine, they will be attended with a humble, teachable, and inquiring disposition; and they who practise what they know, without being proud of it, or trusting to it, and who at the same time wait upon God for further teaching, by faith and prayer, shall never perish for want of instruction. Should the Lord create such a disposition in the heart of an inhabitant of China, Japan, or Otaheite, he would sooner send an angel from heaven, or a minister from the uttermost part of the earth, to show him the way of salvation, than leave him destitute of that knowledge, for which he longs and prays without ceasing. The alms and supplications of such persons spring from proper principles, and go up as a memorial before God; not to merit his favour, but to plead with him to fulfil his gracious promises. The sublime subjects, which pertain to redemption through the blood of the Son of God, seem more proper for the tongues of angels to proclaim, than for us poor worms of the earth; doubtless, in many respects, they could preach them unspeakably better; yet our humiliating thankful experience may balance something on the other side. In that case, however, it would not be so evident that the excellency of the power, which makes the word successful, is wholly of God; nor would their presence and language be so suited to man's weakness, or so conducive to his comfort. The Lord knows where, and about what, his servants are employed; and when he hath further work for them, he will surely let them know. Implicit obedience tends to increasing light and comfort; and pious servants, or attendants, are a great blessing, which we should seek from God, or use proper means to obtain, and show a proper value for, when they are granted to us.

V. 9—23.

The thoughts and ways of the Lord are far above ours: the best of men are seldom entirely free from some remaining prejudices; even they, who were infallibly guided by the Holy Spirit to declare the doctrine of Christ to

Barnabas is sent to Antioch, who rejoices over the converts, and exhorts them to persevere, 22—24. He goes to fetch Saul from Tarsus; and many are instructed at Antioch, where the dis-

ciples are first called Christians, 25—27. Agabus foretells a famine; and the disciples at Antioch send relief to their brethren in Judea by Barnabas and Saul, 28—30.

mankind, were gradually let into the secret designs of God, and delivered from their mistakes and prejudices, as it became needful. How absurdly then do they act, who want to put the new convert at once in full possession of that whole system, which perhaps themselves have been learning for years! The Lord may command his servants, without assigning his reasons; but he generally satisfies them about the propriety of those services to which he calls them, and their constancy and fervency in prayer very much conduce to it. When pious persons conscientiously deny themselves, in obedience to what they deem the command of God, without self-righteousness or spiritual pride, their conduct may evidence their sincerity, and exhibit to others a very useful example, even should it appear that they were mistaken in their scruples: and in this view, the apostle's readiness to endure hunger, rather than eat forbidden food, and his scrupulous exactness in this respect, during his whole past life, convey to us important and humiliating instructions. What a motley company are they, who are collected together into the Church of God, and secured by the covenant of grace, if we advert to their previous characters and dispositions! Some of them were fierce as beasts of prey; others worldly drudges like their cattle; others grovelling in sensuality, like the creeping things of the earth; and others soaring aloft in ambitious pursuits and towering speculations; or giddy, volatile, and dissipated, like the fowls of the heaven! In short, some were addicted to one vice, some to another; but all were estranged from God and holiness: but when they are truly converted, they become all of one mind and judgment, in the grand concerns of religion; they have the same faith, hope, and love, and the same motives and distinguishing principles; and their several natural dispositions, being corrected, regulated, and moderated by sanctifying grace, render them more qualified in different ways to serve the common cause of the Gospel. Let us then learn not to call those common whom God hath cleansed, nor to despise those whom he hath received, and not to despair of or neglect those whom he may yet call to the knowledge of himself. If we diligently endeavour to discover the meaning of his word, the dispensations of his providence and our own experience will often throw light upon it; and, without any immediate revelation, we shall be directed and encouraged to proceed, nothing doubting, in the path of duty. But how strong must prejudice be when so many divine monitions were requisite, to induce an apostle to attend on a man of fair character and good report, who, by the warning of an angel, had sent for him, that he might receive the instructions of life from his lips!

V. 24—43.

They who love the truth, will desire to bring their friends acquainted with it, and will diligently use their influence with them for that purpose. Whilst numbers

despise the servants of God, some will honour them in an improper manner: and it becomes them decidedly to refuse exorbitant respect, for humility and modesty are the peculiar ornaments of piety. But, alas! how seldom are we called to speak to auditories, however small, in which it may be said, that "they are all present in the sight of God, to hear all things that are commanded us of God!"—Whatever men may assert, or object, it will be found "that God is no Respector of persons;" and if any do not see the consistency of this with evangelical truth, or the sovereignty of his dispensations, let them learn to admit, that this is wholly owing to their narrow capacities, and the self-love of their carnal hearts. For God will not limit his conduct by the rules, or according to the systems, of bigoted and prejudiced persons; he will give grace to whom he pleases, and as he sees best, and the fruits of that grace will always meet with his acceptance, through the mercy of the covenant and the merits of its great Mediator. When he begins, he will carry on his work: and by whatever way he leads sinners to heaven, they will be prepared to join the chorus of the redeemed, in singing "salvation to God and the Lamb." That preventing grace, which leads men to fervent prayer and conscientious obedience, is not given to supersede the necessity of the Gospel, but to make way for it. The ministers of Christ must therefore declare to sinners, of every character, that word which God hath sent to men, preaching peace to them by Jesus, the Prince of peace and the Lord of all, by whom alone they can be saved, and to whom they must at length submit in one way or other. Many serious inquirers hear reports of this doctrine, but so distorted and misrepresented, that they are for a long time set against it; and they are astonished, when, in answer to their prayers, the Lord leads them to hear and receive his truth from the very persons, against whom they have been so prejudiced; and when they find their doctrine so different, in its nature and tendency, to what they expected, and so exactly suited to their wants and desires.—Whilst we consider the effects of our Redeemer's immeasurable unction by the Holy Ghost, let us endeavour to copy his example, being unwearied in doing good, and in promoting the deliverance of our fellow-sinners from the oppression of Satan, by all the means which we can devise; thus it will appear that God is with us, whatever men may say of us, or do to us. Receiving the testimony of the apostles and prophets to the efficacy of his sacrifice, and the free remission of our sins through faith in his name, let us daily prepare to meet him, as the constituted Judge of the living and of the dead.

V. 44—48.

When we endeavour to mix faith with the word of God, and to yield obedience to it, we may expect to be more fully illuminated, sanctified, and comforted by the gift of the Holy Spirit; that through the love of God

a vill. 14, 15. Gal.
1. 17-22
b. x. 31-39. xiv.
2. x. 3. 1. Gen.
1. 1. 1. 1.
xvii. 27. xviii.
1-10. 14. xi. 10.
xviii. 15. xxxviii.
1-2. xlii. 1-6.
xlii. 6. 10. 10.
1. 2. 3. xlii. 2.
Jer. xiv. 19.
Hos. 11. 3. 2.
Am. ix. 11. 2.
Zeph. 3. 7. Zeph.
ii. 11. 10. 9.
Zeph. 3. 7. Zeph.
ii. 11. 10. 9.
11. Mark xvi.
15. Luke 10. 32.
Rom. xv. 7-12.
c. x. 15. xv. 1.5.
xvi. 20-23.
Gal. ii. 12-14.
d. x. 23. 25. 48.
John. xv. 2.
1 Cor. v. 11.
2 John 10.
e. xiv. 27. Josh.
xvii. 21-31.
Prov. xv. 1.
f. Mark. 1-3.
g. Jer. 11. 1-14.
h. Jer. 11. 9. Am.
vi. 1-7. vii. 2.
i. Jer. 1. Luke 15.
20.

AND the apostles and brethren that were in Judea, heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,

3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

4 But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying,

5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:

6 Upon the which, when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.

8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.

9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that can not thou common.

10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.

11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Cesarea unto me.

12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover, these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:

13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter;

14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God?

Rom. ix. 15, 16. 23, 24. xi. 34-36. — f. x. 47. Job ix. 12-14. xxxiii. 13. xl. 2, 8, 9. Dan. iv. 35. Rom. ix. 20.

n. Num. xiv. 10. John xiii. 38. xvi. 17. 2 Cor. xii. 8.
o. iv. 10-12. x. 17. Ex. iv. 14. 27.
p. vii. 23. x. 15. 20. xlii. 2. 2. xv. 7. xvi. 6, 7. John xvi. 13. 2. Thes. ii. 2. q. Matt. 1. 20. r. x. 23. 45. 22. 39. s. x. 26. 22. 39. — 32. xlii. 11. Heb. 1. 14. t. ix. 41. u. x. 6. 22. 27. 32. 33. xvi. 1. Mark xvi. 16. John vi. 61-9. xiii. 27. x. 31. Rom. i. 16. 17. x. 9. 10. 1 John v. 9. x. 11. 39. xvi. 15. 31. Gen. xlii. 7. xlii. 18. Pa. c. ii. 17. c. ii. 17. c. xv. 15. 14. Prov. xx. 7. 16. l. xi. 8. 9. Jer. xxxiii. 33. Luke xiv. 10. y. x. 34-44. z. x. 45. 46. xix. 6. a. ii. 2-12. iv. 31. b. x. 35. 35. Luke xxiv. 8. John xiv. 28. xvi. 4. 2 Pet. iii. 1. c. 5. x. 12. 2-4. Matt. iii. 11. Mark i. 8. Luke iii. 16. John i. 38. d. Prov. i. 23. Ia. xlii. 3-5. Ez. xxxiii. 23. Jer. ii. 28. iii. 16. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. e. 15. xv. 8. f. Matt. xx. 14. 15. Rom. ix. 15, 16. 23, 24. xi. 34-36. — f. x. 47. Job ix. 12-14. xxxiii. 13. xl. 2, 8, 9. Dan. iv. 35. Rom. ix. 20.

being shed abroad in our hearts, we may use our tongues to celebrate his praises. This inward baptism of the Spirit is especially to be valued; yet outward ordinances should not be neglected: and they who pretend that they have no occasion for the external signs, because they have received the internal grace of the covenant, speak and act in a very unscriptural manner, and give reason for suspecting that they deceive themselves; yet if we have both the outward sign and the inward and spiritual grace, it is not of much importance in what order we have received them. They who have learned and experienced the things of God, will desire the further company of his ministers, to build them up in their most holy faith. But surely, we sinners of the Gentiles should read this chapter with peculiar gratitude and admiring praise: thus the partition-wall was broken down, the law of ordinances that was against us was abolished, the door of mercy was opened to us, that we might become fellow heirs with the ancient people of God, in all the blessings of his covenant and salvation. May the Lord speedily recall the Jews into the Church, and bring in the fulness of the Gentiles, that his name may be hallowed, his kingdom established, and his will done, throughout the whole earth, as it is by all the angels in heaven!

NOTES.

CHAP. XI. V. 1-3. The conduct of the Church.

when they heard of Cornelius's conversion, and Peter's conduct respecting him, emphatically illustrates the degree, in which the Jews were prejudiced against the Gentiles, even when they appeared to worship God alone, and were exemplary in their general conduct, unless they were circumcised, and became obedient to the Mosaic law. If the whole company of believers could be so alarmed and offended at Peter, for eating on such an occasion, with persons of so good a report as Cornelius and his friends, what must have been the thoughts of the Jews in general concerning the state of the Gentiles? (x. 34, 35.) We can, however, hardly suppose that the apostles contended with Peter on this account: yet, if the general opinion had not been unfavourable to his conduct, none would have publicly called him to an account, or have warmly contested the point with him. This fact is likewise an unsatisfactory proof, that the primitive Church had no idea of Peter's supremacy: nay, it seems that the persons concerned did not render due respect to his apostolical authority. He, however, pleaded no exemptions; but, with a becoming candour and frankness, stated the whole transaction to them, and thus vindicated what he had done beyond the possibility of objection.

V. 4-17. (Notes, x. 16-23. Marg. Ref.) Not so. &c. (8.) It has been argued from this, that only unclean animals were seen in this vision; but that is not determined in the text; and the apostle's objection seems to

18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

19 ¶ Now they which were scattered abroad, upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Cyprus, and Antioch, preach-

ing the word to none but unto the Jews only.

20 And some of them were men of Cyprus, and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

have been made against the general proposal to him of slaying and eating whatever animal he chose. *Baptized, &c.* (16.) (Note, Matt. iii. 11.) *Did to us.* (17.) And that immediately, without imposition of hands, and even previously to baptism, or a direct confession of faith in Jesus, and this after all the preceding declarations of his will.

V. 18. The evidence of the express purpose of God, which appeared in all the circumstances of this transaction, overpowered the prejudices of the objectors; and they could not but admire and adore his grace, which had opened a way even to the Gentiles to obtain eternal life, when they repented, and forsook idolatry and wickedness, and turned to God and his worship and service, and which had indeed given to some of them this "repentance unto life." It may hence be inferred, that even the disciples did not before consider the professed repentance of a Gentile to be sincere and acceptable, unless it led him to embrace the religion of the Jews. This shows that many things, which learned men have stated, concerning the proselytes of the gate and their privileges, rather show what ought to have been, than what really was the case. Dr. Whitby has here a long note, to show that the language of this verse and of similar passages, which state that repentance and faith, &c. are the gift of God; does not imply that they are not *conditional*, and to show that they give encouragement to those alone who perform the *conditions*. That repentance and faith, and every kind of obedience is man's *duty*: that means should be used, by such as desire to perform these duties, and that none receive the gift and grant of God, who live and die in the neglect of the appointed means of grace, are propositions not in the least to be contested. But this learned divine, and many others, seem to forget, that "the heart of stone," "the uncircumcised heart," "the carnal mind which is enmity against God," effectually prevents every man from *desiring* spiritual blessings, till removed by regeneration. Hence it is "God that worketh in us to will," as well as to do. "We have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will." (1st. x.) They blessed God, that he had afforded the same mercy to the Gentiles as to the Jews, that if they will return and amend, and receive Christ, they shall be saved, and that he had given them the grace to do so. (Hammond.) The inseparable connexion of repentance and eternal life should not pass unnoticed in this place.

V. 19—21. (Note, viii. 4.) The words here trans-

lated *preaching*, do not necessarily imply a public and authoritative proclamation. "*Speaking* the word to none, but the Jews only; they spake unto the Grecians, declaring the glad tidings of the Lord Jesus," "As in this place the Hellenists are opposed to the Jews, and as the Church of Antioch was, as it were, a new Jerusalem for the Gentiles, it appears that, under this term, those were included, who had so far profited by their acquaintance with the dispersed Jews, that, condemning idolatry, they acknowledged God, who had spoken by Moses and the prophets, though they remained uncircumcised, of which description Cornelius was, as it is evident from the preceding history." (Beza.) "Instead of Ἑλληνιστῆς, *Hellenists*, the Alexandrian manuscript, which is favoured by the Syriac and some other ancient versions, reads Ἕλληνες, *Greeks*, which common sense would require us to adopt, even if it were not supported by the authority of any manuscript at all. For as the Hellenists were Jews, there would, on the received reading, be no opposition between the conduct of these preachers, and those mentioned in the preceding verse. Here undoubtedly we have the first account of preaching the Gospel to idolatrous Gentiles: for it is certain that there is nothing in the word Ἕλληνες to limit it to such as were worshippers of the true God. As the Greeks were the most celebrated of the Gentile nations near Judea, the Jews called all the Gentiles by that general name." (Rom. x. 12. Gal. iii. 28. Col. iii. 11.) (Doddridge.) It would, however, in my mind, be far preferable to leave the point undecided, or to adopt Beza's exposition, than to alter the text without the authority of any manuscript; for who can say, how far men may proceed in altering the Scriptures by conjectural criticisms, pleading at the same time that common sense requires it. The distance of Antioch and Cyprus from Jerusalem renders it probable, that none but *Grecians*, (or Jews using the Greek, and not the Hebrew or Syriac language, and reading the Greek translation of the Scriptures in their synagogues,) resided in those parts; and if there were synagogues of Jews who used the Hebrew or Syriac, no good reason can be assigned, why the word of God should be spoken to them only, and not to their brethren, who differed from them in nothing but language. It is, therefore highly probable, that the persons spoken of for a considerable time, addressed none but Jews and circumcised proselytes; but that, at length, the report of Cornelius' conversion having reached Antioch, some of them were encouraged to preach to uncircumcised persons also; and their great success, by the immediate power of the Lord,

22 ¶ Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves

* with the Church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

27 ¶ And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

28 And there stood up one of them, named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit, that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cesar.

29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea:

30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders, by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

ACTS. 23. XV. 4. 6. 29. XVI. 4. XX. 17. 1. TIM. V. 17. TIC. 5. JAM. V. 14. 1. PET. V. 1. 2. 1. COR. XVI. 3, 4. 2. COR. VII. 17-21.

accompanying the word, gave a divine sanction to their proceedings. And, (though not so clear as to be indisputable,) it is not unlikely, that at Antioch, and about this time, the Gospel was first preached to idolatrous Gentiles. Was not the extraordinary success of the word, and the holy effects that followed by the hand of the Lord, as real a sanction, both to the mission of the preachers, and to their conduct in preaching to the Gentiles, as outward miracles would have been?

V. 22. 'The apostles do not rashly condemn the extraordinary vocation, but judge of it by its effects.' (*Beza*.) Barnabas was sent by the apostles, as it may be supposed, to examine on the spot into the nature and effects of that success which had attended the Gospel at Antioch; and to set in order such things as related to the appointment of pastors, and the administration of sacred ordinances to the new converts; perhaps to baptize them, and so add them to the Church. (24.)

V. 23, 24. Barnabas saw the grace of God, in its happy effects on the conduct and disposition of these converted Gentiles, and this greatly rejoiced his benevolent mind. But he was aware that their faith would be assailed by manifold temptations and persecutions, and that they would be discouraged through the prejudices of their Jewish brethren: he therefore exhorted, encouraged, and besought them, by every argument and motive that he could devise, to cleave to the Lord Jesus, or abide with him, by a continued exercise of faith, and a bold profession of his name and obedience to his commandments, whatever they might be called to renounce, venture, or suffer, for his sake, assured that he would not fail to accept, comfort, support, and reward them. For he was a good man, a person of remarkable affection, philanthropy, and genuine candour, as well as eminent for the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the exercise of a vigorous faith in the midst of danger and persecution. So that through his labours, and those of the other teachers, great accessions were made to the number of Christians at Antioch, and a flourishing Church was planted there, from which preachers were afterwards sent forth to evangelize the nations.

V. 25, 26. As so large and encouraging a sphere of usefulness was unexpectedly opened in this great and populous city, Barnabas went from thence to Tarsus, that he might procure the assistance of Saul; and, having prevailed with him to accompany him, they laboured together at Antioch, for one year, in further instructing the numerous converts, and in reducing the Church there to order and regularity, as well as in preaching the Gospel to the unconverted inhabitants. The original seems to imply, that the name of *Christians* was given to the disciples by a divine monition. (*Marg. Ref.*) 'The believing Jews and Gentiles being made one Church, that the name of Jew and heathen might no more continue the distance that was betwixt them, this new name was given to them both, as some conceive, according to the prophesy mentioned.' *Is. lxx. 15. (Whitby.)* Their enemies had hitherto called them Nazarenes, or Galileans: and if they had devised some other opprobrious name, they would probably have derived it from the word *Jesus*, rather than from *Christ*, or the *Messiah*, which they would never allow that the crucified Nazarene had been. On the other hand, the disciples had called each other brethren, believers, and saints, which names were not sufficiently distinguishing; but the word Christian aptly denoted their reliance on that anointed Prince and Saviour, who was generally rejected with disdain by Jews and Gentiles: it also implied, that they too were partakers of an unction by the Holy Spirit. Doubtless it was afterwards used as a term of reproach by their persecutors, though it was so honourable in its meaning and original. At present it is applied promiscuously to so vast and heterogeneous a multitude, that it scarcely implies either honour or reproach; and they, who seriously profess to believe and obey Christ, are generally distinguished by other names, whether they are spoken of with respect, or in derision.

V. 27-30. These prophets were evidently endowed by the Holy Spirit with the power of foretelling future events, and were of a superior order of extraordinary ministers, however the word may sometimes be used. (xxi. 10. 12.) The scarcity predicted by Agabus was to be

CHAP. XII.

King Herod persecutes the Church, kills James, the brother of John; and imprisons Peter, 1—4; who, in answer to unceasing prayer, is delivered by an angel, 5—17. Herod puts the keepers to death;

and leaving Jerusalem, goes to Cesarea, 18, 19. Proudly receiving the honour, due to God alone, he is smitten by an angel, and dies miserably, 20—23. The word of God prospers, 24. Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch, 25.

throughout all the world, as the Roman empire was ostentatiously called. Some indeed would explain the original word, of the land of Judea and Galilee, &c.; but the expression seems incapable of that meaning; and the famine might be very general, and severely felt in the various provinces of the empire, though some places might be less straitened than others. 'Eusebius saith of this famine, that it oppressed almost the whole empire; and that it was recorded by historians most adverse to our religion; that it is by Suetonius, in the life of Claudius, who saith, it happened, (*ob assiduas sterilitates*,) through a long barrenness. Josephus saith that it raged so much in Judea, that many perished for want of victuals; and Dion Cassius, that it was a very great famine.' (*Whitby*.) The believers at Antioch, which was a rich and trading city, were probably far more affluent than those in Judea, who had also impoverished themselves by selling their estates after the day of Pentecost. For these reasons, and perhaps because the Gentile converts wished to conciliate the affections of their Jewish brethren, they determined to make a collection, according to their gain in trade, or from their estates, and to send a sum of money to relieve the poor Christians in Judea. Barnabas and Saul were intrusted to carry these fruits of the faith and love of the Gentile converts to Jerusalem; and as perhaps the apostles were absent, preaching the Gospel in other places, they delivered the money to the elders, that they might intrust it to the deacons to be distributed. This is the first time elders are mentioned in the Church of Christ; but we shall have a more favourable opportunity of considering several questions relative to their office: without doubt they were pastors of the Christian Church; and, as both Peter and John call themselves *Elders*, (1 *Pet.* v. 1, 2-2 *John* 1;) it is not quite clear that the apostles were not included. (*Marg. Ref.*) The original word is *presbyteros*, whence comes *presbyter*, and by contraction *prester*: hence the English word *priest*, which by no means signifies a *sacrificer*, as many suppose.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—18.

The imperfection of human nature, even in its best estate, appears, when pious persons are offended and grieved at those things which should excite in them the most lively joy and gratitude. Sometimes they are displeased to hear even of the word of God being preached and received, because the peculiarities of their own sect or system have not been adhered to; and they are ready to find fault with the Lord's plan of bringing sinners to repentance, and faith in Christ, and with those that execute it; because *their plan, and their narrow prejudices*, have been broken in upon. Hence it is, that the zealous servant of God may expect to be censured on account of

those things in which his Master has most owned him, and by those whom he most esteems and loves! We should, however, meekly bear with the infirmities of our brethren; and, instead of taking offence, or answering with warmth, we ought candidly to explain our motives, and show the nature of our proceedings, in order to satisfy and conciliate their minds. It behooves every one to remember who, and what, he is; and whilst men are very zealous for their own regulations, they should take care that they do not *withstand God*, or prescribe other terms of admission among them, than he hath appointed for admission into his Church; lest they should reject and grieve those, who have believed in Christ, and received the gift and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, even as they. Men of piety and candour, though they have been prejudiced, will be satisfied with a proper answer, and a sufficient explanation and reason; and they who love the Lord will glorify him, when they are certified that he hath given repentance unto life, to the most abject of their fellow sinners.

V. 19—30.

When the Lord Jesus is preached in simplicity, and according to the Scripture, his hand will attend the word to give it success; and when sinners are brought to believe, and to turn unto the Lord, really good men, who are full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, will discern, admire, and rejoice in, the grace of God bestowed upon them; and they will exhort all, who profess the Gospel, to cleave to the Lord Jesus with purpose of heart, knowing how many efforts Satan will employ to draw them aside. Where a prospect of great usefulness appears, they will bestow pains to procure the assistance of the most able and zealous ministers, though themselves should be thus eclipsed; and while such men proceed with one heart in the work, believers will be encouraged in assembling together, in order to their edification and establishment. We, at this day, are called by the same name as these ancient disciples; may we be anointed with the same Spirit, and walk in their steps! A Christian is a member of Christ's mystical body, a temple of the Holy Spirit, an adopted child of God, an anointed king and priest unto him, and an heir of everlasting glory. May we be ambitious of these honours, which belong to all his saints! may we "walk worthy of this vocation wherewith we are called!" and may "all who call themselves Christians be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith, in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life!" Such Christians indeed will sympathize with their brethren in all their afflictions; the various dispensations of Providence will give them opportunity of showing their love, by distributing according to their ability to the necessity of the saints; thus God will be glorified, the harmony among believers promoted, the faith and hope of the poor encour-

NOW about that time, Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

2 And he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword.

3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

5 Peter therefore was kept in prison; but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the Keepers before the door kept the prison.

7 And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in

the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals; and so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

9 And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel: but thought he saw a vision.

10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city, which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street, and forthwith the angel departed from him.

11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

raged, their prayers and praises excited, and fruit brought forth, which will abound to the account of those by whom it is produced. The wisdom of this world indeed would suggest, in the prospect of a famine, the propriety of hoarding for ourselves and families against the emergency; and doubtless frugality, when not covetous, is not only prudent, but an incumbent duty: yet the wisdom from above will teach us, in such circumstances, to "lend to the Lord," by giving liberally to his needy servants, and to trust him, when the time comes, to provide for us in his own manner and measure.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII. V. 1—4. This Herod, surnamed Agrippa, was grandson to Herod the great by Aristobulus, nephew to Herod Antipas, who slew John Baptist, brother to Herodias, his incestuous paramour, and father to king Agrippa, of whom we shall read hereafter. The emperor Caligula made him tetrarch of Galilee; and Claudius afterwards made him king of Judea, because he had been serviceable to him in obtaining the empire. Judea was before, and soon after, under the dominion of a Roman governor. Herod, being invested with his new dignity, endeavoured by all means to ingratiate himself with the Jews; and this probably united with his hereditary enmity to the Gospel, in exciting him to persecute the Church. He seems to have harassed the Christians for some time, before he attacked the apostles; but at length he seized on James, the son of Zebedee, and immediately ordered him to be beheaded. Thus was he baptized with his Lord's baptism, as had been predicted; (Matt. xx. 20—23.)

and received the crown of martyrdom before any of the other apostles. As Herod found that the Jews were much pleased with this measure, he apprehended Peter also; and probably he intended to put the other apostles to death, when he could get them into his power; but as the pass-over and the feast of unleavened bread were then celebrated, he meant to defer his proceedings against Peter till these solemnities were over. He therefore committed him to sixteen soldiers, who were appointed to guard him in prison, night and day, four at a time by rotation; intending, as soon as the feast was ended, to gratify the Jews by his public execution. If Easter was observed at that time in the Christian Church, it must be evident that Herod would pay no regard to it: it is therefore surprising that the venerable translators of the Bible should use the word *Easter*, instead of the *passover*, in this connexion. This Herod was a great zealot for the Mosaic law, dwelt much at Jerusalem, and was fond of all opportunities of obliging the Jews. This early execution of one of the apostles would illustrate the courage of the rest in going on with their ministry, as it would evidently show, that all their miraculous powers did not secure them from dying by the sword of their enemies. (Doddridge.)

V. 5—11. The time of Peter's imprisonment gave the Church an opportunity, not of concerting measures for his rescue, but of pouring out their fervent prayers for the preservation of his useful life. Probably they met together in different places for that purpose; and one company succeeding to another, there was literally no intermission of their prayers for him, day nor night. Yet he was free

12 And when he had considered *the* thing, ^a he came to the house of Mary, the mother of ^c John, whose surname was Mark, ^e where many were gathered together, praying.

13 And as Peter ^e knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to ^{*} hearken, named Rhoda.

14 And when she knew Peter's voice, ^b she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

15 And they said unto her, ⁱ Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, ^k It is his angel.

16 But Peter continued knocking: and

when they had opened *the door*, and saw him, they were astonished.

17 But he, ^l beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, ^m declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto ⁿ James, and to the brethren. ^o And he departed, and went into another place.

18 Now as soon as it was day, ^p there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.

19 And when Herod had ^q sought for him, and found him not, ^r he examined the keepers, and ^s commanded that *they* should be put to death. And ^t he went down from Judea to Cesarea, and *there* abode.

from anxiety about the event; and the night before his intended execution, whilst others were earnestly praying for his life, he went to sleep with the utmost composure, though his posture must have been very uneasy, being chained with two chains, one on each hand, to the two soldiers between whom he lay. Even the great light, which attended the angel's entrance into the dungeon, did not immediately awake him; but when the angel, gently smiting his side, caused him to arise, he found his chains immediately loosed. Yet neither the voice of the angel, the light in the prison, the falling of the chains, nor the preparation of Peter to depart, was noticed by the keepers, who were supernaturally thrown into a deep sleep. Nay, Peter himself supposed that he only saw a vision, as he had sometime before done, and that it was not a reality. The wards or watches, here mentioned, seem to have included the stated guard of the prison, as well as the other soldiers appointed to keep Peter: these too were rendered insensible to the whole transaction. The great iron gate separated the environs of the prison from the city, and was doubtless barred in the strongest manner; yet it opened of its own accord! When the angel had led Peter out of the reach of his keepers, and into a part of the city which he knew, he departed from him, and then he became sensible of the reality of his deliverance. *Without ceasing.* (5.) The word *extinguish*, primarily signifies *extended*; but because the fervency of our desire is usually the cause that we pray much or long for any thing, therefore to pray *extinguish*, is also to pray fervently and importunately. (Whitby.)

V. 12—17. This Mary was the sister of Barnabas. (Col. iv. 10.) It is probable, that it had been customary for some of the believers to assemble at her house for religious worship; though it can scarcely be supposed that Peter knew they were then joining in prayer for him. He, however, deemed it best to go thither. But either their hopes were sunk very low, or they expected their prayers to be answered in some other way, for they were utterly indisposed to believe the report of the damsel, who informed them that he stood at the gate; and when she insisted upon it that it was Peter, for she knew his voice,

rather than suppose that he had actually obtained his liberty, they concluded "that it was his angel." They seem to have spoken according to the notion, (true or false,) which hath generally prevailed, that when people are near death, or have actually expired, a spirit, or angel, in their exact form, and speaking with their voice, sometimes appears to their friends or acquaintance; which perhaps first arose from the opinion, that every man hath his guardian angel appointed to take care of him. For to suppose that they only meant that it was a messenger from him is absurd, as a messenger could not speak with his well-known voice, though he might use his name. When, however, Peter at length obtained admission, their transport of surprise was so great, that he could hardly obtain a hearing, in order to inform them how the Lord had answered their prayers in his deliverance. The other apostles seem to have been absent from Jerusalem; but James, the son of Alphaeus, who wrote the epistle, was in some place of concealment in the neighbourhood: and Peter desired especially that he should be informed of his deliverance, for his encouragement. Having thus given proper directions to the disciples, he deemed it his duty to retire to some place of greater safety. 'It is utterly incredible, that he now went to Rome, and made an abode of twenty-five years, which the popish writers pretend.' (Dodbridge.) It would be easy to multiply similar instances, in which the legends of the Romish Church as much contradict the sacred history, as its traditions make void both the commandments and testimonies of God.

V. 18, 19. The astonishment of the soldiers when they found Peter was gone, their endeavours to throw the blame from themselves upon each other, and their dread of Herod's vindictive rage, may easily be conceived. Indeed they had cause to tremble: for that tyrant, exasperated at his disappointment, and unwilling it should be thought that Peter had been miraculously delivered, ordered them to immediate execution; perhaps alleging that Peter's escape was owing to their negligence and sleeping upon guard. Yet it is highly probable he perceived that Peter had been rescued in a supernatural manner, as all the

CHAP. XIII.

Barnabas and Saul, by the direction of the Holy Spirit, are set apart by fasting and prayer, and sent forth to preach the Gospel, 1—3. Attended by Mark, they arrive at Cyprus, and preach at Salamis, 4, 5. At Paphos, Elymas the sorcerer, opposing them, is smitten with blindness, and the deputy, Sergius Paulus, believes, 6—12. They pass through Pamphylia, (where Mark leaves them,) to Antioch in Pisidia, 13, 14. Paul preaches in the synagogue, showing that Jesus was the Messiah, through whom all believers were pardoned and justified; and warning his hearers not to reject him, 15—41. The Gentiles desire to hear the word again; and some Jews and proselytes join Paul and Barnabas, 42, 43. Almost the whole city throng to hear the word, 44. The envious Jews gain say and blaspheme; and the apostles

turn to the Gentiles, of whom many believe, 45—49. The Jews raise a persecution, and drive Paul and Barnabas away, who go to Iconium, 50, 51. The disciples are filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost, 52.

NOW there were ^a in the church that was at Antioch, certain ^b prophets and teachers; as ^c Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and ^d Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, ^e which had been brought up with ^f Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 As ^g they ministered to the Lord, ^h and fasted, ⁱ the Holy Ghost said, ^k Separate me Barnabas and Saul for ^l the work whereunto I have called them.

3 And when ^m they had fasted and prayed, and laid ⁿ their hands on them, ^o they sent them away.

A peaceful conscience, a lively hope, and the consolation of the Holy Spirit, can produce the most entire composure in the immediate prospect of death, even in those very persons, who have sometimes been the most distracted with terrors on that account. When the Lord sees good to deliver, all obstructions are insignificant: his angels gladly visit the dungeons or cells, where his poor and afflicted children lie: even they can defeat, or suspend, all the powers of men; and they delight to minister comfort to the heirs of salvation. Whether we be waiting for deliverance from the bondage of sin, or for the termination of our trials and sorrows, whilst the Lord affords us his light, and puts forth his power to excite our attention and expectation, we should implicitly follow his directions, and wait his will. Thus will he lead us forth to liberty and safety, and deliver us from the power and expectation of our strongest enemies. He sometimes answers prayer in so unexpected a manner, that his people can scarcely believe it a reality: nay, their fears and misapprehensions may for a time exclude the joy to which he calls them; and even that joy, being accompanied with other tumultuous passions, may unfit them for the employment of the present moment; but the whole will surely issue in glad thanksgivings. It is our duty to take care of our lives, whilst the Lord sees good to preserve us; to shelter ourselves from the violence of furious enemies; and to give encouragement, from our experience, to those who are exposed to similar dangers, as well as to excite them to praise God in our behalf.

V. 13—25.

engage in this hateful work; and the tyranny of persecutors, when obstructed in its course, is apt to vent itself on every one that comes in its way, without regard to equity and mercy. But men of this character ripen apace for more signal vengeance, whilst they are buoyed up with success and flattery into the most extravagant pride and arrogance. We may, however, learn wisdom from the policy of the Tyrians and Zidonians: for we have justly offended the almighty Lord with our sins; we entirely depend on him for life, and breath, and all things; it surely then behoves us to humble ourselves before him, that, through the appointed Mediator, who is ever ready to befriend us, we may be reconciled to him, before wrath come upon us to the uttermost; as it did upon proud Herod, who, though others trembled at his impotent rage, would not fear the almighty God. But a haughty spirit is before a fall: God resisteth the proud as his rivals and enemies; angels gladly vindicate his glory, by crushing such sacrilegious competitors; the whole creation stands ready to avenge its Creator's cause upon those who refuse to give him the glory; and the most contemptible vermin are able to degrade, vilify, and torment, those haughty rebels, who affect to be worshipped as deities. The triumphing of the wicked is short: the word of God, and the cause of the Gospel, have stood their ground against and outlived many such boasting persecutors and opposers as Herod; whose destruction has made way for its more abundant success; and the ruin of every one, who shall hereafter engage against the cause of Christ, will introduce its still further progress. But they, who labour to promote it, shall go from strength to strength, and proceed from one service to another, till their work is finished; and then they shall enter into those glorious mansions, from which their eyes shall behold, and only behold, the destruction of the workers of iniquity.

The instruments of persecution are exposed to great danger: the wrath of God is suspended over all, who

q 6. xx. 13
f 10. xv. 24
25 xxv. 38

13 ¶ Now when Paul and his company^a loosed from Paphos, they came to^b Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.

q 19. 21-24
u 5. xvi. 13
2 xvii. 4
x 27. as. 21
1 Luke v. 16-18
y xviii. 17
Mark x. 22
u 16. u 20 37
2 xv. 7
xvi. 1
a 10. xiv. 3
b 10. xiv. 3
1 Cor. xiv. 3
Heb. xii. 22

14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to^c Antioch in Pisidia, and^d went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and sat down.

15 And after^e the reading of the law and the prophets,^f the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, ^g Ye men and brethren, ^h If ye have any word

of exhortation for the people, say on. b xii. 17. xix. 35. xxi. 40. c 20. 11-12. d 12. 14. e 13. 1. f 13. 1. g 13. 1. h 13. 1. i 13. 1. j 13. 1. k 13. 1. l 13. 1. m 13. 1. n 13. 1. o 13. 1. p 13. 1. q 13. 1. r 13. 1. s 13. 1. t 13. 1. u 13. 1. v 13. 1. w 13. 1. x 13. 1. y 13. 1. z 13. 1. aa 13. 1. ab 13. 1. ac 13. 1. ad 13. 1. ae 13. 1. af 13. 1. ag 13. 1. ah 13. 1. ai 13. 1. aj 13. 1. ak 13. 1. al 13. 1. am 13. 1. an 13. 1. ao 13. 1. ap 13. 1. aq 13. 1. ar 13. 1. as 13. 1. at 13. 1. au 13. 1. av 13. 1. aw 13. 1. ax 13. 1. ay 13. 1. az 13. 1. ba 13. 1. bb 13. 1. bc 13. 1. bd 13. 1. be 13. 1. bf 13. 1. bg 13. 1. bh 13. 1. bi 13. 1. bj 13. 1. bk 13. 1. bl 13. 1. bm 13. 1. bn 13. 1. bo 13. 1. bp 13. 1. bq 13. 1. br 13. 1. bs 13. 1. bt 13. 1. bu 13. 1. bv 13. 1. bw 13. 1. bx 13. 1. by 13. 1. bz 13. 1. ca 13. 1. cb 13. 1. cc 13. 1. cd 13. 1. ce 13. 1. cf 13. 1. cg 13. 1. ch 13. 1. ci 13. 1. cj 13. 1. ck 13. 1. cl 13. 1. cm 13. 1. cn 13. 1. co 13. 1. cp 13. 1. cq 13. 1. cr 13. 1. cs 13. 1. ct 13. 1. cu 13. 1. cv 13. 1. cw 13. 1. cx 13. 1. cy 13. 1. cz 13. 1. da 13. 1. db 13. 1. dc 13. 1. dd 13. 1. de 13. 1. df 13. 1. dg 13. 1. dh 13. 1. di 13. 1. dj 13. 1. dk 13. 1. dl 13. 1. dm 13. 1. dn 13. 1. do 13. 1. dp 13. 1. dq 13. 1. dr 13. 1. ds 13. 1. dt 13. 1. du 13. 1. dv 13. 1. dw 13. 1. dx 13. 1. dy 13. 1. dz 13. 1. ea 13. 1. eb 13. 1. ec 13. 1. ed 13. 1. ee 13. 1. ef 13. 1. eg 13. 1. eh 13. 1. ei 13. 1. ej 13. 1. ek 13. 1. el 13. 1. em 13. 1. en 13. 1. eo 13. 1. ep 13. 1. eq 13. 1. er 13. 1. es 13. 1. et 13. 1. eu 13. 1. ev 13. 1. ew 13. 1. ex 13. 1. ey 13. 1. ez 13. 1. fa 13. 1. fb 13. 1. fc 13. 1. fd 13. 1. fe 13. 1. ff 13. 1. fg 13. 1. fh 13. 1. fi 13. 1. fj 13. 1. fk 13. 1. fl 13. 1. fm 13. 1. fn 13. 1. fo 13. 1. fp 13. 1. fq 13. 1. fr 13. 1. fs 13. 1. ft 13. 1. fu 13. 1. fv 13. 1. fw 13. 1. fx 13. 1. fy 13. 1. fz 13. 1. ga 13. 1. gb 13. 1. gc 13. 1. gd 13. 1. ge 13. 1. gf 13. 1. gh 13. 1. gi 13. 1. gj 13. 1. gk 13. 1. gl 13. 1. gm 13. 1. gn 13. 1. go 13. 1. gp 13. 1. gq 13. 1. gr 13. 1. gs 13. 1. gt 13. 1. gu 13. 1. gv 13. 1. gw 13. 1. gx 13. 1. gy 13. 1. gz 13. 1. ha 13. 1. hb 13. 1. hc 13. 1. hd 13. 1. he 13. 1. hf 13. 1. hg 13. 1. hh 13. 1. hi 13. 1. hj 13. 1. hk 13. 1. hl 13. 1. hm 13. 1. hn 13. 1. ho 13. 1. hp 13. 1. hq 13. 1. hr 13. 1. hs 13. 1. ht 13. 1. hu 13. 1. hv 13. 1. hw 13. 1. hx 13. 1. hy 13. 1. hz 13. 1. ia 13. 1. ib 13. 1. ic 13. 1. id 13. 1. ie 13. 1. if 13. 1. ig 13. 1. ih 13. 1. ii 13. 1. ij 13. 1. ik 13. 1. il 13. 1. im 13. 1. in 13. 1. io 13. 1. ip 13. 1. iq 13. 1. ir 13. 1. is 13. 1. it 13. 1. iu 13. 1. iv 13. 1. iw 13. 1. ix 13. 1. iy 13. 1. iz 13. 1. ja 13. 1. jb 13. 1. jc 13. 1. jd 13. 1. je 13. 1. jf 13. 1. jg 13. 1. jh 13. 1. ji 13. 1. jj 13. 1. jk 13. 1. jl 13. 1. jm 13. 1. jn 13. 1. jo 13. 1. jp 13. 1. jq 13. 1. jr 13. 1. js 13. 1. jt 13. 1. ju 13. 1. jv 13. 1. jw 13. 1. jx 13. 1. jy 13. 1. jz 13. 1. ka 13. 1. kb 13. 1. kc 13. 1. kd 13. 1. ke 13. 1. kf 13. 1. kg 13. 1. kh 13. 1. ki 13. 1. kj 13. 1. kl 13. 1. km 13. 1. kn 13. 1. ko 13. 1. kp 13. 1. kq 13. 1. kr 13. 1. ks 13. 1. kt 13. 1. ku 13. 1. kv 13. 1. kw 13. 1. kx 13. 1. ky 13. 1. kz 13. 1. la 13. 1. lb 13. 1. lc 13. 1. ld 13. 1. le 13. 1. lf 13. 1. lg 13. 1. lh 13. 1. li 13. 1. lj 13. 1. lk 13. 1. ll 13. 1. lm 13. 1. ln 13. 1. lo 13. 1. lp 13. 1. lq 13. 1. lr 13. 1. ls 13. 1. lt 13. 1. lu 13. 1. lv 13. 1. lw 13. 1. lx 13. 1. ly 13. 1. lz 13. 1. ma 13. 1. mb 13. 1. mc 13. 1. md 13. 1. me 13. 1. mf 13. 1. mg 13. 1. mh 13. 1. mi 13. 1. mj 13. 1. mk 13. 1. ml 13. 1. mn 13. 1. mo 13. 1. mp 13. 1. mq 13. 1. mr 13. 1. ms 13. 1. mt 13. 1. mu 13. 1. mv 13. 1. mw 13. 1. mx 13. 1. my 13. 1. mz 13. 1. na 13. 1. nb 13. 1. nc 13. 1. nd 13. 1. ne 13. 1. nf 13. 1. ng 13. 1. nh 13. 1. ni 13. 1. nj 13. 1. nk 13. 1. nl 13. 1. nm 13. 1. nn 13. 1. no 13. 1. np 13. 1. nq 13. 1. nr 13. 1. ns 13. 1. nt 13. 1. nu 13. 1. nv 13. 1. nw 13. 1. nx 13. 1. ny 13. 1. nz 13. 1. oa 13. 1. ob 13. 1. oc 13. 1. od 13. 1. oe 13. 1. of 13. 1. og 13. 1. oh 13. 1. oi 13. 1. oj 13. 1. ok 13. 1. ol 13. 1. om 13. 1. on 13. 1. oo 13. 1. op 13. 1. oq 13. 1. or 13. 1. os 13. 1. ot 13. 1. ou 13. 1. ov 13. 1. ow 13. 1. ox 13. 1. oy 13. 1. oz 13. 1. pa 13. 1. pb 13. 1. pc 13. 1. pd 13. 1. pe 13. 1. pf 13. 1. pg 13. 1. ph 13. 1. pi 13. 1. pj 13. 1. pk 13. 1. pl 13. 1. pm 13. 1. pn 13. 1. po 13. 1. pp 13. 1. pq 13. 1. pr 13. 1. ps 13. 1. pt 13. 1. pu 13. 1. pv 13. 1. pw 13. 1. px 13. 1. py 13. 1. pz 13. 1. qa 13. 1. qb 13. 1. qc 13. 1. qd 13. 1. qe 13. 1. qf 13. 1. qg 13. 1. qh 13. 1. qi 13. 1. qj 13. 1. qk 13. 1. ql 13. 1. qm 13. 1. qn 13. 1. qo 13. 1. qp 13. 1. qq 13. 1. qr 13. 1. qs 13. 1. qt 13. 1. qu 13. 1. qv 13. 1. qw 13. 1. qx 13. 1. qy 13. 1. qz 13. 1. ra 13. 1. rb 13. 1. rc 13. 1. rd 13. 1. re 13. 1. rf 13. 1. rg 13. 1. rh 13. 1. ri 13. 1. rj 13. 1. rk 13. 1. rl 13. 1. rm 13. 1. rn 13. 1. ro 13. 1. rp 13. 1. rq 13. 1. rr 13. 1. rs 13. 1. rt 13. 1. ru 13. 1. rv 13. 1. rw 13. 1. rx 13. 1. ry 13. 1. rz 13. 1. sa 13. 1. sb 13. 1. sc 13. 1. sd 13. 1. se 13. 1. sf 13. 1. sg 13. 1. sh 13. 1. si 13. 1. sj 13. 1. sk 13. 1. sl 13. 1. sm 13. 1. sn 13. 1. so 13. 1. sp 13. 1. sq 13. 1. sr 13. 1. ss 13. 1. st 13. 1. su 13. 1. sv 13. 1. sw 13. 1. sx 13. 1. sy 13. 1. sz 13. 1. ta 13. 1. tb 13. 1. tc 13. 1. td 13. 1. te 13. 1. tf 13. 1. tg 13. 1. th 13. 1. ti 13. 1. tj 13. 1. tk 13. 1. tl 13. 1. tm 13. 1. tn 13. 1. to 13. 1. tp 13. 1. tq 13. 1. tr 13. 1. ts 13. 1. tt 13. 1. tu 13. 1. tv 13. 1. tw 13. 1. tx 13. 1. ty 13. 1. tz 13. 1. ua 13. 1. ub 13. 1. uc 13. 1. ud 13. 1. ue 13. 1. uf 13. 1. ug 13. 1. uh 13. 1. ui 13. 1. uj 13. 1. uk 13. 1. ul 13. 1. um 13. 1. un 13. 1. uo 13. 1. up 13. 1. uq 13. 1. ur 13. 1. us 13. 1. ut 13. 1. uu 13. 1. uv 13. 1. uw 13. 1. ux 13. 1. uy 13. 1. uz 13. 1. va 13. 1. vb 13. 1. vc 13. 1. vd 13. 1. ve 13. 1. vf 13. 1. vg 13. 1. vh 13. 1. vi 13. 1. vj 13. 1. vk 13. 1. vl 13. 1. vm 13. 1. vn 13. 1. vo 13. 1. vp 13. 1. vq 13. 1. vr 13. 1. vs 13. 1. vt 13. 1. vu 13. 1. vv 13. 1. vw 13. 1. vx 13. 1. vy 13. 1. vz 13. 1. wa 13. 1. wb 13. 1. wc 13. 1. wd 13. 1. we 13. 1. wf 13. 1. wg 13. 1. wh 13. 1. wi 13. 1. wj 13. 1. wk 13. 1. wl 13. 1. wm 13. 1. wn 13. 1. wo 13. 1. wp 13. 1. wq 13. 1. wr 13. 1. ws 13. 1. wt 13. 1. wu 13. 1. wv 13. 1. ww 13. 1. wx 13. 1. wy 13. 1. wz 13. 1. xa 13. 1. xb 13. 1. xc 13. 1. xd 13. 1. xe 13. 1. xf 13. 1. xg 13. 1. xh 13. 1. xi 13. 1. xj 13. 1. xk 13. 1. xl 13. 1. xm 13. 1. xn 13. 1. xo 13. 1. xp 13. 1. xq 13. 1. xr 13. 1. xs 13. 1. xt 13. 1. xu 13. 1. xv 13. 1. xw 13. 1. xy 13. 1. xz 13. 1. ya 13. 1. yb 13. 1. yc 13. 1. yd 13. 1. ye 13. 1. yf 13. 1. yg 13. 1. yh 13. 1. yi 13. 1. yj 13. 1. yk 13. 1. yl 13. 1. ym 13. 1. yn 13. 1. yo 13. 1. yp 13. 1. yq 13. 1. yr 13. 1. ys 13. 1. yt 13. 1. yu 13. 1. yv 13. 1. yw 13. 1. yx 13. 1. yy 13. 1. yz 13. 1. za 13. 1. zb 13. 1. zc 13. 1. zd 13. 1. ze 13. 1. zf 13. 1. zg 13. 1. zh 13. 1. zi 13. 1. zj 13. 1. zk 13. 1. zl 13. 1. zm 13. 1. zn 13. 1. zo 13. 1. zp 13. 1. zq 13. 1. zr 13. 1. zs 13. 1. zt 13. 1. zu 13. 1. zv 13. 1. zw 13. 1. zx 13. 1. zy 13. 1. zz 13. 1.

17 Theⁱ God of this people of Israel chose our fathers,^j and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt,^k and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

18 And when he had said these things, the Jews and the rulers of the synagogue rose up, and said unto Paul, We have heard thee say many things, and we would have known thee more fully. But he answered them, saying, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.

having heard of Saul and Barnabas, he invited them to come, and declare the word of God unto him: but Barnabas, (who was also called Elymas, from an Arabic word signifying a *sorcerer*, as it is generally supposed,) foreseeing the ruin of his own character and influence, in case the proconsul should embrace the Gospel, did all he could to oppose the apostles, and to prejudice him against their doctrine. It may be supposed, that he disputed against the truth of the facts which they testified, misrepresented the nature and tendency of their doctrine, insinuated many things in a subtle and malicious manner against their intentions, and to their disadvantage; and perhaps he performed some of his lying miracles, to support his own pretensions against them. But Saul, under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit, fixed his eyes upon him, as expressing his abhorrence of his crimes; declared him to be a man full of subtlety, malignity, and mischief; a child of the devil, that bore his image, and supported his cause; and an enemy of all righteousness, notwithstanding his plausible pretences; at the same time sharply expostulating with him, for thus pertinaciously misrepresenting and vilifying the right ways of the Lord, that he might countenance his own vile impostures! He then denounced sentence upon him, as in the name of God, that he should be struck blind, so that, *for a season*, he should be unable to see the light of the sun; though, in case he repented, the calamity might at length be removed, as a similar one had been in the case of the apostle himself. This sentence was immediately executed by the power of God; and, being enveloped in darkness, and filled with horror and confusion, he sought some person to lead him out of the place; an apt emblem of the benighted state of his soul! This evident victory of the apostles over their opponent, being connected with the other evidences of the truth of the Gospel, and made effectual by the power of the Holy Spirit, induced the proconsul to embrace and profess Christianity: for he was astonished both at the energy of the doctrine upon his heart and conscience, and at the power of God by which it was confirmed. Some think that he was the first idolatrous Gentile that was converted to Christ: but it is not probable that all the Gentile converts at Antioch had previously been proselyted from idolatry, or that Saul and Barnabas had made no converts from idolatry in their progress through Cyprus. The conversion, however, of so eminent a person was a very memorable event: probably he continued for some time in his high station, serving the Lord Jesus in the use of his authority,

and countenancing the professors and preachers of the Gospel by his influence and example. Saul is here said to have been called Paul; and henceforth he bears that name. As this is the same with the proconsul's surname, some have thought that he assumed it on account of his conversion; but it is more probable that before this the Greeks had called him Paul, and the Hebrews Saul, and that, from this time being generally conversant with the Gentiles, he was commonly known by the former name. Dr. Lardner has with great learning vindicated the accuracy of St. Luke, in calling this governor a *proconsul*; and shown, that they who governed the provinces by the appointment of the senate were called proconsuls, though they had never been consuls; and that Cyprus was at this time a province of that description.

V. 13—15. It does not appear whether the apostles had any opportunity of preaching the Gospel at Perga, or in Pamphylia: but John Mark by this time grew weary of the fatigue and hardship of the journey; and foreseeing that they should meet with many perils and persecutions in their future progress, he consulted too much his own ease and inclinations; and so leaving them he returned to Jerusalem. This indicated an inconstancy of mind, unbefitting one that was engaged in so important a service, and we shall hear again of the consequences produced by it. Paul and Barnabas, however, proceeded to Antioch in Pisidia, a province of Asia Minor, which was at a great distance from Antioch in Syria, whence they set out. There they went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day; and after the sections from the law of Moses and from the writings of the prophets had been read, the rulers of the synagogue invited them to speak to the congregation. Either they had previously heard of, or from them, or something in their conduct indicated their desire to be heard. The apostles frequented the synagogues on the sabbath-days, in order to find an opportunity to preach: but the disciples in general observed the first day of the week for their assembling together. Yet the Jewish converts seem also to have kept the sabbath for some time; and this change, as well as some others, appears to have been brought about gradually, to avoid giving needless offence to the Jews. *If ye have any, &c.* Literally, "If any word of exhortation be in you," There is some emphasis in this Hebraism; by which it is understood, that whatever there is in us of divine grace is derived to us from God, that we may carry it about as a treasure shut up in earthen vessels. (Beza.)

13 And ¹ about the time of forty years ² suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

19 And ¹ when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of ² Chanaan, ³ he divided their land to them by lot.

7-10. 16. 17-42. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945. 946. 947. 948. 949. 950. 951. 952. 953. 954. 955. 956. 957. 958. 959. 960. 961. 962. 963. 964. 965. 966. 967. 968. 969. 970. 971. 972. 973. 974. 975. 976. 977. 978. 979. 980. 981. 982. 983. 984. 985. 986. 987. 988. 989. 990. 991. 992. 993. 994. 995. 996. 997. 998. 999. 1000.

V. 16—19. The apostle perhaps observed, that some present were indisposed to attend on his discourse: he therefore beckoned with his hand, to intimate his desire of a candid hearing; and then introduced his doctrine by such a reference to the history of Israel, as was suited to conciliate their minds and to fix their attention. Some explain the expression, “Ye that fear God,” of the religious proselytes, (43:) but it is plain, that there were Gentiles, as well as proselytes, in the synagogue; perhaps some place was allotted to them, in hopes that they would soon embrace the Jewish religion, as others already had done. The apostle observed, that the God of their fathers had formerly raised their nation from a state of deep depression in Egypt, to great honour and prosperity in Canaan. He had powerfully delivered them from bondage, graciously borne with their provocations for forty years in the wilderness, destroyed the Canaanites, and then divided the land among them. The margin gives another reading of the clause, “Suffered he their manners.” But the present reading contains an important meaning, (*Marg. Ref.*) and it is not desirable *needlessly* to alter the text, though but in a single letter, without clear authority of ancient manuscripts, which is not in this case adduced. These events were both an accomplishment of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in whose seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed, and a type of a better and more spiritual redemption.

V. 20. This verse has peculiar difficulties connected with it. The time which elapsed from the departure of Israel out of Egypt, to the building of Solomon’s temple, was no more than four hundred and eighty years, (1 *Kings* vi. 1.) But, on the lowest computation, fifty-seven years elapsed from the passage of the Red Sea to the death of Joshua; and eighty-four years, during the days of Samuel, Saul, and David, and till the fourth year of Solomon: and this leaves only three hundred and thirty-nine years from the death of Joshua to the time of Samuel. So that, without adverting to the difficulties of computing the years during the judges, it is evident that this general calculation cannot possibly allow four hundred and fifty years for that part of the history, even continuing it to twenty years after the death of Eli. Some alteration, therefore, seems unavoidably needful either in this narrative, or in the general statement in *Kings*. On this ground some think that three hundred and fifty years should be read in this place, instead of four hundred and fifty: and it is evident that the error might easily be made by a transcriber. This would bring the computation within about ten or eleven years; and, as the historian says, “*about the space*,” &c.; it might be improper to expect greater accuracy. There is, however, no authority that warrants such a

20 And after that ¹ he gave ² unto them judges, about the space of four hundred and fifty years, ³ until Samuel the prophet.

21 And afterward ¹ they desired a king: and God gave unto them ² Saul the son of ³ Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by ⁴ the space of forty years.

change in the text. ‘Josephus saith, that Solomon began to build the temple five hundred and ninety-two years after the children of Israel’s departure out of Egypt. Now if you make the time of the Judges four hundred and fifty years, the computation is exactly five hundred and ninety-one years. He,’ (Paul,) ‘therefore, here accords with the computation of his nation at that time, that so they might not except against his words. Wilderness 40, Joshua 17, Judges 450, Samuel and Saul, 40, David 40, Solomon 4.—591. St. Luke continually follows exactly the computation of the Septuagint and of the Jews, as we learn from his inserting Canaan, (*Luke* iii. 36;) his making Saul to reign forty years, (21;) and from this verse, where he accords exactly with Josephus.’ (*Whitby*.) Perhaps this learned writer did not recollect, that this computation of Josephus alters the whole system of biblical chronology. For the chronology of the Hebrew Scripture to the Exodus, and from the building of the temple till the coming of Christ, is founded on grounds sufficiently firm: but if one hundred and twelve years, more than the general computation, passed between the Exodus and the building of the temple, then the birth of Christ took place in the year of the world 4115, instead of 4004. It is well known, that the chronology both of the Septuagint and of Josephus is erroneous and confused, in no ordinary degree; but how far the apostle, or Luke, in recording his discourse, took these unimportant matters as they found them, is another question: and if they did so, the circumstance of learned men in their studies having discovered that those generally admitted calculations were inaccurate, has, in my view, nothing to do with the divine inspiration of either the preacher or the historian. For they were inspired, to deliver divine truth to mankind, unsophisticated and unimpaired; not to correct genealogies, or give chronological calculations. Even on the supposition that the apostle was aware of the inaccuracy, it would have obstructed his grand object to advance any new opinion, or to go out of his way to correct the current one. ‘Grotius and Usher note here, that other copies read thus: “He divided to them their land after four hundred and fifty years, and after that he gave them judges:” and they begin the time of this computation from the birth of Isaac, and to the end of seven years, (in Canaan,) when the land was divided to them, was about four hundred and fifty years.’ (*Whitby*.) I agree with this writer, that this is not the natural or obvious construction of the passage; but could it stand without any alteration of the text, it might be admitted. As, however, on this interpretation, the text must be altered on insufficient authorities, the solution above given seems most satisfactory.

1 Sam. xii. 25
xiii. 14, xv
11. 22. xvi.
xxviii. 16, 17
xxxi. 6, 2 Sam.
vii. 15, 1 Chr.
xv. 13, Hos.
xiii. 10, 11

1 Sam. xvi. 1
13. 2 Sam. ii. 4
v. 3-5, vii. 8
1 Chr. xxviii. 4, 5
Ps. lvi. lxxviii. 30
— 72. lxxix. 19,
140. 15. lxxxi.
24. 26. lxxiv.
21. lxxvii. 24,
25. lxxviii. 5,
xxv. Heb. iii. 4, 5
v. vii. 46. 1 Sam.
xiii. 14. 1 King.
— 17. Am. ix. 11.

v. ii. 30. 2 Sam. vii.
12. 13. Ps. lxxviii.
35-10. vii. 13, 14.
15. 10. Jer. xviii.
5-6. xxxiii. 15-
17. Matt. i. i. xxi.
v. xxi. 42.
Luke i. 31-33.
49. John vii. 42.
Rom. i. 3. Rev.
xxii. 16.

1. 2. 36. iis.
26. iv. 12. v. 30,
31. Is. xliii. 11.
xlv. 21. Zech.
17. 1. Matt.
21. Luke ii. 42.
10. John iv. 42.
Rom. xi. 26.
1. 4. 10.
— 14. iii. 3-6.
2 Pet. i. 1.
1. 20. iii. 2. 18.
1 John iv. 14.
Jude 25.

a. 1. 22. v. 37. xix.
2. 1. Matt. iii.
8. Luke i. 76-81, 2.
c. 1. John i. 6-8.
15. 6c. iii. 25-
36. v. 31-36.
36. xx. 24. Mark.
vi. 16-28. John.
iv. 34. xix. 28.
20. Tim. iv. 7.

Rev. xii. 7.
c. xix. 4. Matt. xiii. 11. Mark. i. 15. Luke iii. 15, 16. John i. 20-23. 26. 27. 29. 34. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945. 946. 947. 948. 949. 950. 951. 952. 953. 954. 955. 956. 957. 958. 959. 960. 961. 962. 963. 964. 965. 966. 967. 968. 969. 970. 971. 972. 973. 974. 975. 976. 977. 978. 979. 980. 981. 982. 983. 984. 985. 986. 987. 988. 989. 990. 991. 992. 993. 994. 995. 996. 997. 998. 999. 1000.

22 And ^h when he had removed him, ⁱ he raised up unto them David to be their king; ^j to whom also he gave testimony, and said, ^k I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

23 Of ^l this man's seed hath God, according to ^m his promise, ⁿ raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus :

24 When ^o John had first preached before his coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

25 And as John ^p fulfilled his course, he said, ^q Whom think ye that I am ? I am not ^r he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of ^s his feet I am not worthy to loose.

26 Men and Brethren, ^t children of the stock of Abraham, ^u and whosoever among you feareth God, ^v to you is the word of this salvation sent.

27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, ^w because they knew him not, ^x nor yet the voices of the prophets, ^y which are read every sabbath-day, ^z they have fulfilled them in condemning him.

28 And ^{aa} though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

29 And ^{ab} when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.

that was written of him, ^{ac} they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.

30 But ^{ad} God raised him from the dead :

31 And ^{ae} he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, ^{af} who are his witnesses unto the people.

32 And ^{ag} we declare unto you glad tidings, ^{ah} how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,

33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again ; as it is also written in the second psalm, ^{ai} Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, ^{aj} now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, ^{ak} I will give you ^{al} the sure ^{am} mercies of David.

35 Wherefore he saith also ^{an} in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine holy One ^{ao} to see corruption.

36 For David, after he had ^{ap} served his own generation by the will of God, ^{aq} fell on sleep, ^{ar} and was laid unto his fathers, ^{as} and saw corruption :

37 But ^{at} he whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

38 And in many other places, ^{au} we say that which is in the Hebrew scriptures, ^{av} that he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, ^{aw} who are his witnesses unto the people.

39 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{ax} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

40 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{ay} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

41 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{az} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

42 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{ba} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

43 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bb} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

44 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bc} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

45 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bd} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

46 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{be} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

47 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bf} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

48 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bg} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

49 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bh} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

50 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bi} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

51 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bj} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

52 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bk} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

53 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bl} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

54 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bm} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

55 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bn} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

56 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bo} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

57 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bp} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

58 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bq} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

59 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{br} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

60 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bs} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

61 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bt} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

62 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bu} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

63 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bv} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

64 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bw} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

65 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bx} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

66 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{by} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

67 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{bz} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

68 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{ca} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

69 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{cb} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

70 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{cc} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

71 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{cd} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

72 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{ce} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

73 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{cf} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

74 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{cg} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

75 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{ch} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

76 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{ci} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

77 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{cj} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

78 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{ck} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

79 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{cl} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

80 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{cm} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

81 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{cn} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

82 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{co} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

83 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{cp} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

84 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{cq} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

85 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{cr} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

86 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{cs} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

87 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{ct} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

88 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{cu} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

89 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{cv} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

90 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{cw} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

91 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{cx} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

92 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{cy} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

93 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{cz} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

94 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{da} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

95 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{db} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

96 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{dc} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

97 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{dd} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

98 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{de} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

99 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{df} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

100 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{dg} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

101 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{dh} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

102 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{di} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

103 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{dj} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

104 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{dk} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

105 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{dl} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

106 And he said these things, and then he sang a hymn, and said, ^{dm} I will give you the sure mercies of David.

11 14. iv. 10 38 Be it known unto you therefore,
xxviii. 24. Ez. men and brethren, " that through this man
xxviii. 32. Dan. is preached unto you the forgiveness of
10 19 sins.

11 38 v. 31. x. 39 And ^h by him all that believe are
43. Ps. xxxiii. 12 justified from all things, ⁱ from which ye
xxv. 4. 7. Jer. could not be justified by the law of
xxv. 34. Dan. ix. 1
21 Mic. vi. 18—
22 Zech. xiii. 1
Luk. xxv. 12
John 3. 24.
21 Cor. v. 16—
1. 7
1. 32. Col. i. 13.
12. 13. ix. 9—11 12. x. 4—10 1 John i. 1, 2. 12—h. 1c. liii. 11 Luke xxviii. 14 John v.
1. Rom. iii. 24—30 iv. 2-8 24. 25 v. 1, 2 9 viii. 1 30—34 x. 10 1 Cor. vi. 11. Gal.
14. 16. 14. 8—11—John ix. 23. xxv. 4. Ps. cxlvi. 2 Jer. xxxi. 32 Luke x. 25. 29
John i. 17 Rom. iii. 19 20 iv. 15 v. 20 vii. 9—11 viii. 3, 4 ix. 31, 32 x. 4, 5 Gal. ii.
16. 25. iii. 10—12 21—25 v. 3, 4 Phil. iii. 6—9 Heb. vii. 19 ix. 9, 10. x. 4. 11.

Jesus, and procuring his crucifixion from Pilate; though they could allege no crime against him, except that he declared himself to be the son of God. And when they had without designing it fulfilled the various predictions of his sufferings and death, they allowed him to be taken down from the cross and buried, and then guarded the sepulchre with all care, to prevent any imposition. But God had raised him from the dead; which was testified by a great number of most unexceptionable witnesses. Accordingly they (even Paul and Barnabas) had travelled so far, to declare to their brethren the glad tidings, that God had fulfilled in their days the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David, in raising from the dead the Lord Jesus, and thus attesting him to be his only begotten Son, according to the prophecy of the Messiah contained in the second Psalm. (Note, Ps. ii. 7.—9.) The passage here quoted, shows that the Messiah was the Son of God in a peculiar sense; and the decree there mentioned was confirmed, when he was "declared to be the Son of God" with power by his resurrection from the dead." (Rom. i. 3, 4.) In respect of that event, it might be inferred from the words of the Lord by his prophet, declaring that he would give to believers "the sure mercies of David:" (Notes, &c. Is. lv. 1—3. Marg. Ref.) These "sure mercies" especially referred to the promised Messiah, and his kingdom and Salvation: but the same prophet had just before predicted the sufferings and death of the Messiah in the strongest terms; (Notes, Is. liii:) so that these sure mercies could not be conferred, but through his resurrection and exaltation. Accordingly David had prophesied in another Psalm, that "God would not suffer his holy" "One to see corruption." (Notes, ii. 24—31. Ps. xvi.) This could not be understood of David himself: for having served the interests of Israel, during that generation in which he lived, according to the will of God, he fell on sleep; and, being laid to his fathers, he saw, or turned to, corruption. But Jesus, his descendant and Antitype, having arisen on the third day, saw no corruption; nor was he again to die and return to the grave, the scene of corruption; but to live for ever in heavenly glory: and it does not appear, that any other person, since the world began, actually died, and yet did not see corruption. Enoch and Elijah were translated, that they should not see death. They whom the prophets, and Jesus, and the apostles, raised afterwards died, and returned to dust; and those who rose after Christ's resurrection, it is probable had seen corruption. Every part therefore of the doctrine accorded to the predictions of the prophets, which concurred with the testimony of the apostles to the resurrection of Jesus,

40 ^b Beware therefore, lest that come upon you ^c which is spoken of in the prophets;

41 Behold, ^e ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: ^f for I work a work in you days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

42 ¶ And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, ^g the Gentiles

—44. xxi. 20—25 Rom. xi. 7—14 Eph. iii. 3—6 Col. i. 26, 27 1 Thes. ii. 16 1 Pet. iv. 17—o. x. 33 xxviii. 28. Ez. iii. 6, 7 Matt. xi. 21—23 xix. 30.

and with the miracles wrought by him and them, to demonstrate that he was the promised Messiah.

V. 38—41. The apostle here proceeded to apply the doctrine, which he had stated and proved. It was of the utmost importance to the people, to be assuredly convinced that through *that Person*, even Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, forgiveness of sins was preached to them, by his atoning sacrifice, and as the gift of his mercy: for none could possibly obtain that benefit, save by faith in him. But all that believed would be completely justified from every charge brought against them on account of their sins, and in such a manner, as could not be done according to the Mosaic law: There were several crimes, for which no sacrifices were appointed, but to which the sentence of death was annexed by that law: nor could the legal sacrifices ever take away guilt from the conscience, except as the penitent offender, through them, had a believing dependence on the promised Redeemer and his atoning sacrifice. That whole dispensation also was now virtually abolished, having lost all its efficacy, as to those who rejected the salvation of Jesus. It therefore behooved them to beware, lest the awful denunciations of the prophets, against the despisers of God's mercy and justice, should come on them. The work here intended, may be that of redemption by the blood of Christ: or rather that of approaching vengeance on the Jews for their contempt of him, and the admission to the Gentiles of their forfeited privileges. All these were fully testified, authenticated, or predicted; but the scornful men of that age and nation would not believe them, and therefore they would be filled with astonishment, and so perish; (Notes, &c. Is. xxviii. 14—19. Hab. i. 5.) The prophecies here referred to, seem primarily to have related to the Babylonish captivity; yet they were still more awfully accomplished in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the rejection of the Jews with tremendous judgments, for their opposition to the Gospel. This discourse is worthy of particular consideration; especially for the representation which it gives of the apostle's message; and as it enters so explicitly, in the way of the epistles, into the doctrine of justification by Christ. The Gospel which the apostle brought, was the fulfilment of the great promise made to the fathers. (23. 29. 32.) It was the word of God, (44. 46.) It related to a Saviour and salvation, "the word" "of this salvation." (23. 26. 47.) Repentance was the great preparation, (24:) the forgiveness of sins and full justification its primary blessings, (38, 39;) and its great scope, its ultimate blessing, *everlasting life*, (46. 48;) and these blessings restricted to believers in Jesus, and extended to all of them without exception.

a vij. 51. Ex.
xxx i 10 Deut.
xxxii. 21. Is.
xlix 5-8. Mat.
x 13-15 xxi.
63 xxii 6-10.
Lake xiv. 16-
24 John i 11

Rom. x 19-21.
 xi 11-13.
 b xviii 6 xxviii.
 28 Is 1v 5
 c i. 8. x 15. xxii
 21 xxvi. 17, 18.
 Matt. xxviii. 19
 Marc. xvi. 15
 Luke xxiv 47.
 d xxvi 23 Is. xlii

1. 6 xlix. 6 lx.
3. Luke ii 32
e xv. 14-16. Ps.
xlii. 27-29.
lxvii. 2-7.
lxviii. 7, 8 xcvi.
1, 2. xcvi. 2, 3.
cxvii. Is. ii. 1-3.

xlii. 13-16.
 xlii. 9-12. xlv
 22 li 10. lix. 19
 20 Jer xvi 19
 Hos i 10 Am.
 ix. 12. Mic. iv.
 2. 2. 3. 3.

2, 3 v 7 Zeph.
iii 9, 10. Zech.
ii. 11. viii. 20—
23. Mal. i. 11
642 ii 41 viii 8

2 Thes ii 13, 14.
8 Rom xiii. 1
—145. vi. 12
2. — — — 1 Cor.

make the same proposal to the Gentiles, and associate with them: for this they had not only the command of the Lord Jesus, but the authority of the Scriptures, which had declared that the Messiah was to be set for "the Light of the Gentiles, and for salvation to the ends of the earth." (*Marg. Ref.*) This declaration rejoiced the Gentiles, who honoured and respected the word of God, whilst the Jews opposed and perverted it; and though it is probable that all who were thus affected at first, did not at that time believe unto salvation; yet many did, even such as were ordained or appointed unto everlasting life.—Some interpret the word here used, of the internal disposition of the heart of the hearers; they who were in earnest to obtain eternal life at all adventures believed the Gospel. This indeed does not seem the meaning of the word: yet as such a disposition is the effect of *special grace*, it still leads us back to that humiliating doctrine, which so much labour is employed in vain to obscure. 'The translators of the English Testament give many words a "predestinarian sense, which there is no reason for," (*Gilpin*.) The justice of this remark might fairly be disputed; but it shows at least what even an opponent allows to have been the creed of the translators; for men do not, generally, in translating or commenting, give words a meaning contrary to their own decided opinions, without very strong reasons for so doing. It is indeed useless, and highly improper, and quite unnecessary, to rest the argument on a word which may perhaps admit of some other meaning; but the laboured discussions of those who are greatly afraid lest the doctrine of gratuitous personal election to eternal life should be collected from it, leaves this impression on my mind, that these writers would themselves have carefully avoided a term, which needs so much guarding against misconstruction. The reader, who understands the original, may judge for himself concerning the Scriptural use of it, by consulting the marginal references.

ACTS 17-22. 16.
 17-22. 16. v. 17.
 17-22. 16. v. 17.
 17-22. 16. v. 17.
 17-22. 16. v. 17.

secution against Paul and Barnabas, "and expelled them out of their coasts.

51 But "they shook off the dust of their

feet against them, and came unto 'Iconium.

52 And the disciples "were filled with joy, and "with the Holy Ghost.

ACTS 17. 21.
 ACTS 17. 21.
 ACTS 17. 21.
 ACTS 17. 21.
 ACTS 17. 21.

V. 49-52. The indefatigable and successful labours of the apostles, exasperated more and more the unbelieving Jews; and they, being themselves destitute of authority, excited some women of rank, who had embraced and were zealous for the Jewish religion, and by their means the magistrates were stirred up against the apostles, so that an edict was obtained, banishing them from the city and its adjacent territory, as disturbers of the public peace. And they, having solemnly warned their persecutors in the way which Jesus had commanded, that they were thus exposing themselves to the wrath of God, (*Marg. Ref.*) went to Iconium, a city to the north-east of Antioch. But the new converts, whom they left behind, instead of being discouraged by this opposition, were filled with holy joy; being made partakers of the extraordinary gifts, as well as the graces and consolations, of the Holy Spirit.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-12.

The Lord raises up and brings forth instruments for his work, from various places and situations in life; and that zeal for his glory, with which he inspires their hearts, induces them to renounce the most flattering connexions and prospects, that they may be employed in promoting his cause. Whatever means are used, or rules observed, for ordaining ministers, the Holy Spirit alone can fit them for, and call them to, their important work; but *solemn fasting and prayer* are proper attendants on their separation to that sacred service. They who "are moved "by the Holy Ghost to take this office upon them," and "are sent forth by him," will find opportunities of exercising their ministry. Indeed, the ignorance, carelessness and profligacy of numbers, will obstruct their usefulness; yet false teachers and vain pretenders to religion are the most pernicious opposers of the Gospel; for they prejudice the minds of inquirers by their misconduct, or induce them, through misrepresentations and perversions, to embrace some vain delusion, instead of "the truth as it is in "Jesus." Prudent men, however, who know the value of their souls and the importance of eternal things, will desire to hear the word of God, and to give it a fair and careful investigation, whatever be their rank in life. It does not behove us, who have no miraculous powers, or infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit, to use such decided language in reproving opposers and deceivers, as Paul did to this sorcerer; yet we may plainly expose the hypocrisy, dissimulation, malice and enmity of those children and servants of the wicked one, who show themselves to be enemies to all righteousness, by deliberately perverting the right ways of the Lord, and the evident truths of the Gospel, to promote their own credit and interest. Assuredly their end will be according to their works; their wilful blindness will expose them to judicial blindness, and this will terminate "in the blackness of darkness for ever," unless they repent during the season of the Lord's long-

suffering towards them; and the truth of God will be established, and made successful, by the ruin and confusion of its opponents.

V. 13-22.

They "who put their hands to the plough, and look "back, are not fit for the kingdom of God." If we are not prepared to face opposition and to endure hardship, we are not properly qualified for the work of the ministry. Yet some, who have at first disappointed the expectation of senior ministers, have afterwards been recovered and made useful. The reading of the Scriptures in the public assemblies of God's people, is an ancient and excellent usage; and they who are called to preach the Gospel will find a peculiar advantage, in laying their credentials and instructions in this manner before the people. Yet, alas! many both read and hear the word of God, who do not understand or believe it. The Gospel must be preached to every creature; yet with an especial address to those who fear God, and inquire after the way in which his favour may be obtained. On some occasions it is advisable to put the case most favourably, in respect of the dispositions and profession of our hearers, that we may thence take occasion to reason with them from their own principles, and to exhort them to behave consistently with their characters. Every transient view of the dealings of God with his Church reminds us of his mercy and long-suffering, and of man's ingratitude and perverseness; and when he grants our *inordinate* desires, we may expect a scourge instead of a comfort. But he will remove those who rebel against him, that he may raise up others in his Church, who may act more according to his own heart, to fulfil all his will.

V. 23-37.

The most honoured servants of God have discovered or been conscious of great imperfection, and have confessed themselves unworthy to perform the meanest service to the divine Saviour. They call men to repentance, and direct their attention to Jesus; yet they soon fulfil their course, and are gathered to their fathers; but "he ever "liveth to save to the uttermost all them that come to "God through him." Still this word of salvation is sent to us, and every one that truly fears God will accept of it. But too many fulfil the Scriptures by opposing the truth through ignorance and unbelief, after the example of those that crucified the Lord of glory. May we then look to him, as declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead, now no more to see corruption; as testified to by prophets and apostles, and as the substance and repository of the sure mercies of David, that by faith in him we may walk with God, and serve our generation according to his will, and when death comes, we may fall asleep in him, with a joyful hope of a blessed resurrection.

CHAP. XIV.

Paul and Barnabas preach with success at Iconium; and being driven thence by the Jews, they preach at Lystra, 1—7. They heal a man who had been a cripple from his birth, 8—10. The priests and people attempt to sacrifice to them as gods, and are hardly restrained by their most earnest expostulations, 11—18. Paul is stoned, at the instigation of the Jews from Antioch and Iconium, and left for dead; but reviving, he goes with Barnabas to Derbe, 19, 20. They return to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the churches and ordaining elders in each of them, 21—23. Passing through Pisidia, Pamphylia, and Perga, they sail to Antioch in Syria, and rehearse to the church what things God had wrought by them, 24—28.

2 Tim. 51.
6 ix. 20 xiii. 46.
xvii. 1, 2, 17
xviii. 4. xix. 8.

AND it came to pass ^a in Iconium, that they ^b went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake,

V. 38—52.

Forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ, and him alone, should be preached to all men: for this is the most needful blessing for every sinner, and an introduction to all others; and by him all that believe are justified from all their sins, be they ever so numerous and aggravated; a privilege which no law or institution besides could ever confer. But wo to those despisers, who will not believe the testimony of God, either concerning the redemption which he hath wrought, or concerning the judgment which he hath appointed, but treat the declaration of them with infidel contempt or careless indifference! With what astonishment will they at length hear the despised Jesus denounce on them the sentence of everlasting condemnation! But whilst many thus “judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life,” others, and those the most unlikely persons, often desire to hear more of the glad tidings of salvation: thus the prodigal comes to himself, returns home, and is welcomed and feasted, whilst the elder brother is filled with indignation and envy, and begins to oppose, contradict, and blaspheme. We must not, however, be satisfied with hopeful impressions, but exhort such as are thus seriously impressed to “continue in the grace of God,” and instruct them to resist the temptations to which they will be exposed. As many as are “ordained to eternal life will believe;” but we know not who these are; we should therefore declare, that “Jesus is placed for a Light of the Gentiles, and for salvation to the ends of the earth;” and we should publish his truth as extensively as we can, and bear our testimony against those who oppose and reject it, however honourable or devout they may appear. Thus the word of God will

that a great multitude, both of the Jews, and also of the ^d Greeks, believed.

2 But ^e the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

3 Long time ^f therefore abode they ^g speaking boldly in the Lord, ^h which gave testimony unto ⁱ the word of his grace, ^k and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

4 But ^l the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the ^m apostles.

5 And ⁿ when there was an assault made, both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews, with their rulers, to use them ^o despitely, and to stone them,

6 They ^p were aware of it, ^q and fled unto ^r Lystra and Derbe, cities of ^s Lycania, and unto the region that lieth round about :

7 And ^t there they preached the gospel.

Luke vi. 28.—p ix. 24. xvi. 13, 14. xxii. 15. &c. 2 Kings vi 9—12.—q Matt. x. 23. r 20, 21. xvi. 1, 2. 2 Tim. iii. 11.—s 11.—t 21. vii. 4. xi. 19. xvii. 3. 1 Thes. ii. 2. 2 Tim. iv. 2.

be glorified in the midst of persecution; and he will fill his disciples with grace, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, to support them under tribulations, and to render them triumphant over all the power and subtlety of the enemy of their souls.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV. V. 1. *Greeks* or *Gentiles*: some of these perhaps were before favourable to the religion of the Jews, and frequented the synagogue; but probably others were idolaters, who on that occasion had been induced to attend.

V. 2. *Unbelieving*. The same word is often rendered *disobedient*, (Heb. iv. 11. *Marg.* 1 Pet. ii. 7. iii. 1.) which shows the intimate connexion between living faith and genuine obedience, and between unbelief and disobedience. *Evil affected*. That is, envious and malignant.

V 3, 4. The apostles deemed it necessary to continue at Iconium for a considerable time, boldly exercising their ministry in dependence on the Lord, in order to encourage and establish the new converts, that the opposition to which they were exposed might not subvert them; and God was pleased at this time to enable them to work many miracles, which perhaps they had not done in other places. Thus a considerable part of the inhabitants, either embraced the Gospel, or favoured the cause; and these counteracting the machinations of their opponents, the apostles were for a time protected. ‘Our constancy ought to equal the obstinate perverseness of the wicked. We should not give place, because of threatenings, no nor even of open violence, except there be an evident necessity: and then, not for the sake of enjoying quiet, but that the Gospel may be more extensively propagated.’ (Beza.)

8 ¶ And there sat a certain man at Lystra, ^a impotent in his feet, ^b being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

9 The same heard Paul speak: ^c who steadfastly beholding him; and perceiving that ^d he had faith to be healed,

10 Said with a loud voice, ^e Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, ^f The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

12 And they called Barnabas, ^g Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, ^h and would have done sacrifice with the people:

14 Which when ⁱ the apostles Barnabas

and Paul heard of, ^j they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

15 And saying, ^k Sirs, ^l why do ye these things? ^m we also are men ⁿ of like passions with you, ^o and preach unto you, that ye should turn ^p from these vanities unto ^q the living God, ^r which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein;

16 Who in times past ^s suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

17 Nevertheless, ^t he left not himself without witness, ^u in that he did good, ^v and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, ^w filling our hearts with food and gladness.

18 And with these sayings ^x scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

V. 5—7. The rulers of the synagogue, and the principal persons among the Jews, seem to have gained over to their party the magistrates of the city. Thus a plan was formed, violently to apprehend Paul and Barnabas; and, having disgraced and insulted them as disturbers of the city, to stone them as blasphemers. But this plan was discovered, probably at the very time when it was to have been accomplished, and the apostles escaped and went first to Lystra, and afterwards to Derbe, where, not at all discouraged by danger or ill usage, they boldly preached the Gospel. The situation of these cities may be far better understood by a good map, than by any description in words.

V. 8—10. The apostle perceived that the cripple "had faith to be healed." It is probable, that, by a divine suggestion, he knew the man expected a cure from the power of the Lord Jesus, and that it was a proper occasion for him to perform a miracle. He therefore called to him with a loud voice, to stand upright on his feet; and he was enabled at once to use his limbs with entire ease, agility, and vigour, as though he had never been lame. In some manuscripts and ancient versions it is added, "I say unto thee, in the name of the Lord Jesus 'Christ, Arise,'" &c.

V. 11—18. When the idolaters saw this astonishing effect follow upon the speaking of a word, they concluded, according to their fabulous traditions, that two of their deities had become visible in human form. The age and gravity of Barnabas suggested to them the opinion that he was Jupiter, their supreme deity; and Paul's promptitude in speaking led them to suppose that he was Mercury, the patron of eloquence, and the interpreter, as they imagined, of the gods. And so firmly were they persuaded of these things, that the priest of Jupiter, whose temple was near

the gates of the city, was induced to bring oxen, and garlands, (either to decorate the sacrifices, or the intended objects of their worship,) and they were about immediately to seek the favour of the apostles by divine honours, and a propitiatory offering! But they, discovering the intention of the idolaters, were more discomposed by it than by all the persecution which they had experienced; and to express their detestation of these idolatrous practices, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, expostulating with them about their conduct, protesting against the sacrilegious honours intended them, declaring that they were mere men like themselves, liable to the same passions, infirmities, sufferings, and death; and reminding them that they came to preach to them, that they should relinquish such vanities and delusions, and worship the great Creator of the universe. This was very bold and decided language to zealous idolaters and their priests, in such a critical juncture; and it has been properly contrasted with the temporizing conduct of heathen philosophers, who, being convinced of the folly and falsehood of the vulgar superstition, not only conformed to it, but instructed their disciples to do the same, as a part of their duty to the republic. Thus they made hypocrisy and dissimulation, in so important a matter, a: essential part of their instructions, confirmed it by their example, and perpetuated, as much as they could, the most stupid idolatry, connected with the most abominable vices, from generation to generation! Let the intelligent reader compare this conduct and declaration of the apostles towards the worshippers of Jupiter, with some modern admired effusions of expanded candour, in which the worship of God, whether men call him JEHOVAH, Jove, Lord, or by any other name, is supposed to be equally acceptable to him. Is it then of no consequence, whether JEHOVAH, or Jupiter, or Baal, be

12 Kings v. 7
xviii. 37. xix. 1.
2 Ezra ix. 3-5.
Jer. xxxvi. 24.
Matt. xxvi. 65.
xvii. 26. xix. 24.
xxvii. 10. 21. 25.
h x. 26. Rev. xxi.
10. xlii. 5.
i Job. 12, 13. xlii.
22. Gen. xli.
Dan. ii. 21-29.
30. John vii. 18.
k Jam. v. 17.
l xviii. 16-18. 29.
m xxvi. 17-20.
n Deut. xxxii. 21.
1 Sam. xii. 23.
o 1 Kings xvi. 1.
p Ps. xxxi. 6.
q xlii. 9, 10.
r xv. 20. xlv. 20.
s vii. 7. Jer. viii.
19. x. 3-5. 14. 15.
t xv. 22. Am.
9. 4. Jon. ii. 9.
u Rom. i. 21-29.
v 1 Cor. viii. 4.
w Eph. iv. 17.
x Deut. v. 26.
y Job. iii. 10.
1 Sam. xvi. 26.
z 2 Kings xix.
16. Jer. x. 10.
Dan. x. 6. John
v. 6. 1 Thes. i. 9.
1 Tim. 15. Heb.
ii. 12.
oiv. 24. xlvii. 24.
28. Gen. i. 1. Ps. xxxiii. 6. exxix. 3. xlvii. 5. 15. xlv. 13. Jer. x.
11. xxviii. 17. Zech. i. 1. Rom. i. 20. Rev. xiv. 7. — p xvii. 30. Ps. xlvii. 2.
20. Hos. iv. 17. Rom. i. 21-29. Eph. ii. 12. 1 Pet. iv. 3. — q xvii. 27. 28. Ps. xix.
1-4. Rom. i. 19. 20. — r Ps. xxxvi. 5-7. Job. i. civ. 24-28. xlvii. 9. 15. 16. Luke vi. 35.
s Lev. xxvi. 4. Deut. xli. 14. xxviii. 12. 1 Kings xviii. 1. Job. v. 10. xxviii. 6. xxviii. 28.
— t Ps. lxxv. 9-13. xxviii. 9. 10. xlvii. 7. 8. 15. v. 6. Jer. i. 24. xlv. 22. Matt. v. 45.
Jam. v. 17. 18. — u Deut. vii. 12-14. Neh. ix. 25. 1s. xxii. 13. 1 Tim. vi. 17.
v Gen. xli. 6. xix. 9. Ex. xxxiii. 21-23. Jer. xlv. 16. 17. John vi. 15.

x xiii 45, 50, 51

x xiii 13

y Matt. xxvii 20

—25 Mark xv

11—14

x xiii 8; 16, 16

xxii 20 2 Cor

xi 25 2 Tim

iii 11

b Jer xiii 19

Heb xiii 12, 13

b 1 Cor. xv 31.

2 Cor. i. 10—

12 xi 23

c xx 9—12

2 Cor. i. 9, 10

vi 9 Rev xi

7—12

d xii 17, xvi 40.

xx 3

e Gr made many

disciples Matt

xxviii 12, Gr

f) 6, 8, 19 xiii

14 51. xv 36.

xvi 2 2 Tim iii 11.

19 ¶ And ^x there came thither *certain* Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who ^y persuaded the people; and, ^z having stoned Paul, ^a drew him out of the city, ^b supposing he had been dead.

20 Howbeit, ^c as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and ^d came into the city; and the next day he departed with Barnabas to ^e Derbe.

21 And when they had preached the Gospel to that city, and had ^{*} taught many, they returned again to ^{*} Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,

22 ^{*} Confirming the souls of the disciples, and ^b exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that ⁱ we must through much tribulation ^k enter into the kingdom of God.

23 And when ⁱ they had ordained them ^m elders in every Church, ⁿ and had prayed with fasting, ^o they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

12 1 Pet. iv 12. Rev ii 10 vii 14 ——— k Matt. xix 24 Mark xvi 7, xxi 23. John ii 5. 2 Pet. i. 11. ——— l 22. Mark iii 14 1 Tim. v 25. 2 Tim. ii 2 Tit 1 5. m xi 30. xv 4. 6 23. xxi 17 1 Tim. v 1. 17—19 Jan. v 14 1 Pet. v 1 2 John 1 3 John 17. 2 Tim 1 12 1 Pet 1 5

x xiii 45, 50, 51

x xiii 13

1 Cor. i. 10—

12 xi 23

c xx 9—12

2 Cor. i. 9, 10

vi 9 Rev xi

7—12

d xii 17, xvi 40.

xx 3

e Gr made many

disciples Matt

xxviii 12, Gr

f) 6, 8, 19 xiii

14 51. xv 36.

xvi 2 2 Tim iii 11.

God? Surely, either the prophets and Apostles were bigots, or these men have renounced Christianity. Paul and Barnabas further added, that God had, in his unsearchable wisdom, justice, and long-suffering, hitherto suffered all nations to walk in their own ways; and therefore idolatry had generally prevailed. Yet the idolaters were without excuse, as God had not left himself without witness, seeing he still had done them good in his providence; and afforded them many temporal benefits, which both satisfied their bodily necessities, and conduced to the joy and gladness of their hearts. By these discourses, they with difficulty restrained the people from proceeding with their sacrifice: yet it seems that they were not disposed to hear their doctrine at this time; but rather were disgusted with their refusal of the honours intended them. ^a As a friend, in sending us frequent presents, expresses his remembrance of us and affection to us, though he neither speak nor write, so all the gifts of the divine bounty, which are scattered abroad on every side, are so many witnesses sent to attest the divine care and goodness. (*Doddridge.*) ^b Here see the devil's malice! He would have brought in the worship of men, by those very persons who were sent to convert men from ^c it! persuading them again to esteem men as gods, as formerly they had done! And how fully he hath done this in the Roman Church, where innumerable men are worshipped with invocation, and even mental prayers, which suppose them to know the hearts of the supplicants, and so to have the property ascribed to God alone in the Scriptures, I have fully showed, &c.' ^d Cicero proves, the gods must be of human shape, because they never appeared in any other.' (*Whitby.*)

V. 19, 20. The apostles still continued at Lystra, in order to improve the advantage which the miracle that they had wrought seemed to promise them. But when the Jews at Antioch and Iconium heard of their success and reputation, they followed them to Lystra, and by their insinuations induced the people to treat them as impostors and disturbers of the peace. Accordingly, they first assaulted Paul, whose activity rendered him peculiarly obnoxious both to the Jews and the idolaters; and, stoning him till they supposed he had been dead, dragged him out of the city with the utmost indignity. But though he was bereft of sense and motion for a time, yet his life was in him; and whilst the disciples stood around him, probably intending to bury him, it pleased God to restore him

miraculously to his strength, and to heal his bruises; so that he was able to travel the next day with Barnabas to Derbe. It does indeed appear that he was not dead; yet, without a miracle, he could not, after being stoned and left for dead, have been able to travel, probably on foot, the next day.

V. 21—23. After the apostles had *disciplined* many in Derbe, they revisited the several cities, whence they had been driven by persecution, to instruct, encourage, and establish, the new converts, and exhort them to continue in the faith; and to show them that the kingdom of God, and his heavenly felicity, must be entered, through many afflictions, trials, and persecutions. They also appointed elders over them in every Church: these elders were their stated pastors, who presided in the worship of God, and preached his word to them. Many expositors are of opinion, that the original word, here translated *ordained*, has reference to the choice of the people, signified by holding up their hands; and many others oppose this supposition: but we cannot imagine that the apostles, in such circumstances, would pretend to appoint any persons to the sacred ministry, who were not acceptable to the people; or that they would ordain any, without their own full satisfaction that they were proper persons, whatever the people might be inclined to. There seems to have been the most perfect harmony in the management of this important concern: yet it can scarcely be doubted, but that both the apostles, and those to whom in some sense they afterwards delegated a part of their authority, interfered with their judgment and influence in the nomination of proper persons to the ministerial office; as well as set them apart by imposition of hands and prayer. In all such questions, the middle, between the extreme points contended for by the zealots of opposite parties, seems to be the nearest to the true state of the case. As the Churches increased, deacons were doubtless chosen, under the superintendency of the elders: but it does not appear that the apostles appointed any at this time. After these matters were settled, the apostles, by prayer and fasting, commended the new converts to the gracious keeping of the Lord Jesus, in whom they had believed. The verb, rendered *ordained*, is used as compounded by Luke, in some other places, where popular election cannot be meant. (x. 41. xxii. 14.) It may then fairly be asked, whether this is the only Scriptural authority for the people choosing their own *spiritual* pastors? or whether any other can be adduced? If no

p xlii 13, 14 xv
 38
 q xl 13, 26 xlii
 1 x. 22, 31
 r xl 11, 17
 s 23 xlii 1-3
 t 30 x. 33
 2 Cor 1, 11 3
 u John 8
 v Rom. 8, 13
 w Col 1, 29 2
 x 16 17
 y 2 Tim iv. 2, 3
 z 6

24 And after they had passed through-
 out ^p Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.

25 And when they had preached the
 word in Perga, they went down into Attalia;

26 And thence sailed ^q to Antioch,
 from whence they had been ^r recommend-
 ed to the grace of God, for ^s the work
 which they fulfilled.

27 And when they were come, ^t and
 had gathered the Church together, ^u they
 rehearsed all that God had done with
 them, and how he had ^x opened the door
 of faith unto the Gentiles.

28 And ^y there they abode long time
 with the disciples.

1 Cor. 4-6 xxi
 10-22: 1 Cor.
 v. 4 xi. 18 xiv.
 23
 u xv. 4 12 xxi.
 19. Rom. xv.
 18. 1 Cor. iii. 5
 x. 9, xv. 10
 x xi. 18. John x.
 9. 1 Cor. xvi.
 9. 2 Cor. ii. 12.
 Col. i. 3. Rev.
 iii. 7, 8.
 y xi. 26. xv. 28.

other; then surely, whatever may be said on the ground of expediency, the *divine authority* of this measure stands on a very slender foundation! It is probable that the apostles, and those employed by them, selected the presbyters, or pastors, from such as were more signally made partakers of miraculous gifts by the Holy Spirit; yet, as these endowments might be possessed by those who had not true faith and grace, and as eminent and intelligent believers seem not always to have been endowed with them, it appears unscriptural to suppose that *all* such were appointed to the pastoral office, and *none* else. No impartial person can, (as it appears to me,) read this passage, without being convinced that stated resident pastors of each Church, and not preachers of the Gospel at large, are here intended; but whether these stated resident pastors were, (as some argue,) bishops, according to the modern acceptation of the word, is a subject which will hereafter come under our consideration.

V. 24—28. After some other labours in the provinces of Asia Minor, the apostles returned to Antioch in Syria; whence they had been recommended, by the prayers of their brethren, to the grace of God, for the work in which they had been so prospered. To them they related their success; and showed how God had, by their ministry, opened the door of faith, by which numbers of the poor Gentiles had entered into the Church: and finding much work at Antioch, they continued there a long time among the disciples.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—10.

Perseverance in doing good, amidst dangers, hardships, ingratitude, and persecution, is a blessed evidence of grace, an expression of the mind that was in Christ, and a distinguishing mark of his faithful ministers. The Lord will enable such followers of him “so to speak,” and will so bless their word, that some in every place, and of divers descriptions, will be brought by their labours to the obedience of faith. But great success commonly causes vehement opposition; and envious and malicious unbelievers will excite the minds of those who are more moderate, and render them evil affected against the brethren. This however, should not discourage those, who are prospered in their work: on the contrary, they should labour the more boldly and diligently, depending on the Lord, to promote his cause; leaving it to him to bear testimony to the word of his grace in such ways as he sees good. In all cities, towns, and villages, where the Gospel is effectually preached, a division takes place among the people: and frequently some unconverted persons for

a time take part with the preachers and professors of the truth, by means of whom the Lord restrains the fury of his enemies till his own purposes are effected. Wherever his servants are driven, they should seek opportunities of making known his truth, without being intimidated by former perils or sufferings. None can profit by the power of Christ, as exercised through his ministers and ordinances, till they have true faith; but all things are possible to those that believe. When we receive this most precious gift of God, we shall be delivered from that impotency in which we were born, and from the dominion of those inveterate habits, which we have ever since been contracting; and we shall be enabled to walk with cheerfulness in the ways of the Lord.

V. 11—18.

The servants of God might often obtain undue honour to themselves, if they would connive at men's errors and vices, with much greater ease than they can prevail with them to honour God, by renouncing their vanities, believing his truth, and worshipping his name. But they must dread and detest all such sacrilegious homage, more than any reproaches or injuries whatever: they ought never to allow their hearers to think of them in any other light, than as men of like passions with themselves, who, having been taught the knowledge of God and of his salvation, are sent to preach it to those, who have hitherto been left to walk in their own ways. We should show the greatest affection to the persons of men, and bear with many of their mistakes and prejudices in a candid spirit; but we must not spare decidedly to protest against those delusions and superstitions, which are as ruinous to men's souls as the grossest immoralities. The Lord saw good for a long time to suffer all nations to walk in their own ways; and he still is pleased to leave vast numbers to follow lying vanities: this should lead us to thankfulness for our peculiar advantages, and to adore the depth of his unsearchable wisdom and justice; but it should not induce us to palliate the idolatries or impieties of our apostate race. God never left himself without witness, in any place or in any age: his long-suffering, and the exuberant bounty of his providence, towards enemies and rebels, are very wonderful; and they proclaim how worthy he is of universal love and adoration, and how inexcusable man is in his forgetfulness of him, and enmity against him. The most cogent arguments, the most earnest and affectionate address, nay, the most stupendous miracles, are scarcely sufficient to restrain men from the greatest absurdities, or the vilest abominations: much less can they, without special grace, convert the hearts of sinners to God and holiness.

CHAP. XV.

Dissentions being creit in the church at Antioch about circumcising the Gentile converts; Paul and Barnabas are sent to Jerusalem to consult the apostles and elders on the question, 1, 2. They arrive at Jerusalem, and the apostles and elders assemble to consider it, 3—5. Peter declares his opinion, 6—11. Paul and Barnabas report what God had done by them among the Gentiles, 12. James decides against the circumcising the Gentile converts, but proposes some rules for their conduct, 13—21. Letters are sent by messengers accompanying Paul and Barnabas to the churches, with the determination of the council, as that of the Holy Spirit also; which are received with joy, 22—31. Judas and Silas, the messengers, abide at Antioch, and labour there, 32—35: Paul and Barnabas purpose to revisit the churches which they had planted; but are separated by a sharp contention about. John Mark, and set out to preach the Gospel in different directions, 36—41.

AND ^acertain men which came down from Judea, taught ^bthe brethren,

and said, ^cExcept ye be circumcised ^dafter the manner of Moses, ^eye cannot be saved.

^f2 When therefore ^gPaul and Barnabas had no small dissention and disputation with them, ^hthey determined that Paul and Barnabas, and ⁱcertain other of them, ^jshould go up to Jerusalem, unto ^kthe apostles and elders about this question.

^l3 And being ^mbrought on their way by the church, they ⁿpassed through Phenice and Samaria, ^odeclaring the conversion of the Gentiles: ^pand they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

^q4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were ^rreceived of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared ^sall things that God had done with them.

^t5 But there rose up certain of ^uthe sect of the Pharisees, which believed, saying, ^vThat it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

^w6 And ^xthe apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

V. 19—23.

They who are not established by the grace of God in faith and holiness, will be liable to be seduced by ill-designing men from one extreme to another; and to treat those as the vilest of malefactors, whom just before they were ready to honour as more than men. This should teach us not to desire or value popularity, or human applause, but to seek that honour alone that cometh from the unchangeable God. Safety, life; breath, and comfort, are entirely at his disposal; and if we have experienced his protection and consolation, in the midst of perils and afflictions, we shall be the better able to confirm the souls of weak believers, to exhort them to continue in the faith, and to animate them to press forward in the way to heaven, though they must pass thither through much tribulation. When proper means have been used, and regulations made, for the edification of new converts and infant Churches, we may confidently commend them, with fasting and prayer, to that faithful, gracious, and powerful Lord, in whom they have believed, in case we are compelled to leave them. If faithful ministers are made useful to souls, they think little of hardships and trials. They who have joined in prayer for a blessing on their labours, will be glad and thankful to hear them rehearse all that God hath done with them; and all, who love the Lord Jesus and their fellow-sinners, will rejoice to hear that he hath opened the door

of faith to those, who before were strangers to him and his salvation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV. V. 1—6. It is probable that the events recorded in this chapter took place about seventeen years after St. Paul's conversion, but some expositors date them three years earlier. The persons who taught the Gentile converts at Antioch that they could not be saved, unless they were circumcised and observed the whole ceremonial law, came from Judea, and professed to speak the sentiments of the apostles and Church at Jerusalem, but they were false brethren, who came to spy out and destroy Christian liberty. Their doctrine could not but prove a great discouragement and temptation to the Gentile converts, and an immense hindrance to the success of the Gospel; at the same time it tended to false sentiments concerning justification, and would eventually have been subversive of genuine Christianity. For these and similar reasons, Paul and Barnabas vigorously opposed them, and used all their authority and every proper argument to satisfy the minds of the people, and to silence the false teachers; yet this did not suffice, and therefore it was determined that they should go up to Jerusalem, and refer the matter to the apostles and elders, that, by their authority and influence, the controversy might be terminated, and the peace of the Church preserved. The apostle informs us that "he went up by revelation;" (Marg.

u 23. *Phar. 14*
 xx 5, 6, 20, 28-
 46, 21, 12-18
 v 1, 24, 1x, 15
 xii 2, 1 Chr
 11, 4, 5
 John 13, 27, xv
 16, Gal. 11, 7-
 25
 1, 16, iii, 10, iv
 25, Ex iv, 12
 Jer 1, 9, Rom
 17, 18
 1, 24, 1 Sam
 xvi 7, 1 Kings
 xii 29, 1 Chr
 xxiii, 9, xxiv
 17, Ps. xlii, 2
 xxxix, 1, 2
 1, 15, 20, viii
 10, xx, 12 John
 11, 24, 25, xxi
 17 Heb. iv, 13 Rev. ii, 23
 24, 15, 17-18
 1 Cor. xii, 16, Gal. iii, 28 v. 6 Eph. ii, 14-22, iii, 6, Col. iii, 11.

7 And when there had been ^a much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ^{*} ye know how that a good while ago ^y God made choice among us, that the Gentiles ^z by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

8 And God, ^a which knoweth the hearts, ^b bare them witness, ^c giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us;

9 And ^d put no difference between us

and them, ^e purifying their hearts by faith.

10 Now therefore ^f why tempt ye God, to ^g put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, ^h which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

11 But we believe, ⁱ that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved even as they.

12 ¶ Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, ^k declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

x 15, 20, 24, 1
 Cor. 1, 2 Heb.
 ix, 14, 1 Pet.
 1, 22
 Ex. xvii, 2, 1x
 vi, 12 Matt. iv.
 7 Rev. iii, 8.
 g Matt. xii, 20-30,
 xxiii, 4 Gal. v.
 h Gal. iv, 1-5, 9.
 Heb. ix, 5, 10.
 1 Rom. ii, 24 v.
 20, 21, vi, 23
 1 Cor. xxi, 22
 2 Cor. xiii, 9
 xii, 14 Gal. i.
 6, ii, 16 Eph. ii
 6, 7, iii, 7-9
 Tit. ii, 11, iii
 5-7 Rev. vi, 9
 xlv, 27, xxi, 19.

Ref. the Lord having made it known to him or to some of the prophets residing there, that he would have him do so. Accordingly he and Barnabas set out on their journey, being attended part of the way by the pastors, or principal persons of the Church, who thus showed their respect to them, and the pleasure they took in their company, and probably bore their expenses; and as they passed through Phenicia and Samaria, they gave a particular account to the Christians there of the conversion of the Gentiles, both at Antioch and in the provinces of Asia, which greatly rejoiced them. In like manner, when they came to Jerusalem, the Church, with the apostles and elders, welcomed them, and there they declared, more fully than they had before heard, what God had done by their ministry. But though these things gave general satisfaction, yet some of the Pharisees, who had embraced the Gospel, but who still retained an undue regard for the ceremonial law, contended that they ought to comply with its precepts. As therefore there was not an entire agreement upon the subject, it was judged expedient for the apostles, elders, and others of the Church, to meet together, and to give the important subject a full discussion, in order that it might be finally determined, to the satisfaction of all concerned in it. — This has commonly been called “the first general council,” and it seems to have also been the last, where it could properly be said, “It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, &c.”

V. 7—11. It is probable, that several of the elders spoke with great earnestness on the subject, on both sides, before the apostles gave their sentiments, and brought the matter to a determination. Indeed it is not certain that any of the apostles were present, except Peter, James, and John; perhaps the rest were employed in preaching the Gospel at a distance. Those present, however, chose rather to hear the arguments of their brethren, and to show the reasons of their own conclusions, than to decide the question merely by virtue of their apostolical authority. But at length Peter arose, and reminded the assembly, that some years before, God had expressly chosen, and directed him to preach the Gospel to Cornelius and his company, that they might be brought to believe in Christ; and the heart-searching God had borne witness to the truth and acceptableness of their faith, by the gift of the Holy Spirit, even as he had done to the believing Jews, putting no difference between them, having “purified their hearts” by faith. The heart may here signify the soul, with

all its faculties and powers, and the expression refers not only to the sanctification of the soul by the Holy Spirit, but also to the purifying of the conscience through the blood of Christ from the guilt of sin. Having received this internal purification through faith in Christ, they did not want the legal purifications, which were types and shadows of these substantial blessings; and as God had, in this first extraordinary case, decided the question, why should his ministers again put it to the trial, as if they meant to tempt him to impose so heavy a yoke on the Gentile converts? This related not merely to circumcision, but to the whole ceremonial law, which, though proper and useful for the time, required so many distinctions, burdensome purifications, expensive sacrifices, long journeys, &c. that it was a very uneasy yoke in every age, even to the inhabitants of the promised land, and still more to those Jews who resided in other countries; and, whilst it served to prevent idolatry from being universal, it also tended exceedingly to prevent the general diffusion of true religion. “Though these words are by most interpreters applied to the numerous ritual precepts, the costly sacrifices, and the frequent tedious journeys up to Jerusalem, required by the law, which made the observance of it difficult and irksome, I would rather refer them to that defect, that the apostle hath observed in it, that it could not purge the conscience from the guilt of sin.” (*Heb. ix. 9, 13, 14.*) that it “could not give life.” (*Gal. iii. 21.*) that it was a killing letter, leaving them under condemnation, (*2 Cor. iii. 7—9.*) and so making it necessary for them to believe in Christ, that they might be justified, (*Gal. ii. 16.*) and redeemed from the curse of the law. (*Gal. iii. 13.*) according to those words of the apostle, (*xiii. 38, 39.*) For to this sense the following words incline, “we could not bear this yoke, for we believe, that by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved.” (*Whitby.*) There was, however, no occasion to impose this yoke upon the Gentiles: as even the Jewish converts did not expect to be saved in any degree by observing the Mosaic law, but merely by faith in Christ, exactly in the same manner with their Gentile brethren, though they deemed it a part of their present duty to observe it.

V. 12. It is expressly said, that “the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter;” and on another occasion the apostles and elders are distinguished from the company of believers. (*xxi. 18—22.*)

11 Cor. xiv. 30—
33 Jam. i. 19
12 Jam. i. 19
13 Jam. i. 19
14 2 Cor. xii. 20
2 Xxi. 1.
22 Pet. i. 1. Gr.
p. 7. Luke i.
c. 78.
q. 15. xlii. 21. Iv.
11. 13. Rom. i.
5. xi. 36. 1 Pet.
ii. 9. 10.
xvi. 47. Rom.
xv. 9—12.
3 Am. ix. 11. 12.
12 Sam. vii. 11—
16. 1 Kings xii.
16. Ps. lxxix. 1.
23—49. Is. ix. 6.
7. Jer. xlii. 21.
—26. Ez. xlii.
22—24. Zech.
xviii. 8. Matt. i.
20—25. Luke i.
31—33. 69. 70.
u Gen. xxi. 18. xxi. 10. Ps. xxi. 26. 27. lxxvii. 1—3. lxxix. 17—19. Is. ii. 2. 3. xl. 10. xix.
59—62. xvi. 16. xlix. 6. 7. lxxi. 18—21. Jer. xxi. 14. Hos. ii. 22. Joel ii. 32. Mic.
i. 2. xvi. 7. Zech. ii. 11. vii. 50—53. Mal. i. 11.—3 Gen. xliiii. 16. Num. vi. 27.
Is. xlii. 7. lxxv. 1.

13 And ¹ after they had held their peace, ² James answered, saying, ³ Men and brethren, hearken unto me!

14 ⁴ Simeon hath ⁵ declared how God at the first did visit, the Gentiles, ⁶ to take out of them a people for his name.

15 And ⁷ to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

16 After ⁸ this I will return, and will ⁹ build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up;

17 That ¹⁰ the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all ¹¹ the Gentiles

upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, ¹² who doeth all these things.

18 ¹³ Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

19 Wherefore my sentence is, ¹⁴ that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are ¹⁵ turned to God:

20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain ¹⁶ from pollutions of idols, and from ¹⁷ fornication, and from ¹⁸ things strangled, and from blood.

21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, ¹⁹ being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day.

2 Cor. xii. 21. Gal. v. 19. Eph. v. 3. Col. iii. 5. 1 Thes. iv. 3. Heb. xii. 16. xlii. 1. 1 Pet. xiv. 21. xv. 23. 1 Sam. xii. 22. Ez. iv. 14. xliii. 5. 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.—1 X. ii. 15, 27. Neh. viii. 1, 2c. Luke iv. 16.

y Num. xlii. 23.
Dan. ix. 7, 8.
Isa. ix. 20.
xviii. 26. Is. xli.
23. 24. xlii. 7.
xlii. 9. 10. Mat.
xiii. 32. xxv. 34.
Eph. i. 4. 11.
1 Thes. i. 2.
1 Thes. i. 13. 1 Pet. ii.
20. Heb. xii. 8.
xvi. 28.
a 10. 24. 28. Gal.
i. 7—10. 11. 4. v.
11, 12.
b xxvi. 20. Is. lv.
7. Hos. xiv. 2.
1 Thes. i. 9. 11.
c 21. 23. xxi. 17.
15. 16. Num.
xxv. 2. Ps. cvii.
37—39. Ez. xiv.
30, 31.
d Cor. viii. 1—4. 13. x.
20—22. 33. Rev.
ii. 12. 20. 15. 30.
e 1 Cor. v. 11. vi.
9. 13. vii. 2.
18. 20. xlii. 1. 1 Pet.
xv. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

"All the multitude," must therefore here be restricted to the whole of the assembly convened for this special purpose, (perhaps including select persons who were not elders,) whose determination was afterwards made known to the Church at large, who concurred in it. The miracles which God wrought by the apostles, when they were preaching to the Gentiles, attested his approbation of their conduct, and proved that they did right in not requiring the converts to be circumcised.

V. 13—15. When Paul and Barnabas had concluded their narrative, the apostle James closed the conference. He first referred them to the account given by Simeon, or Simon Peter, of the manner in which God first visited the Gentiles in mercy, to take from among them a people to worship and glorify his name; and he showed them, that, though this might be contrary to their prejudices, yet it accorded with the predictions of the prophets.

V. 16—18. (*Notes*, Am. ix. 11, 12.) The quotation here varies in some respects from the passage, as it stands in our version. Edom was a common type of the enemies of the Church: by "the house of David possessing the remnant of Edom," as the prophet expressed it, the conversion to Christ of a remnant from those nations which had been most hostile to the Jews might be meant; so that the Lord's name should be called upon by, or used in connexion with, persons of every nation. This the Lord had undertaken to perform; and as all his works were known to him from the beginning of the world, so he was now evidently accomplishing his plan, which he had before arranged, and of some parts of which he had given previous intimations.

V. 19—21. James's opinion therefore was, that the Gentile converts ought not to be molested about circumcision or the ritual law; but that it might be expedient and proper to point out to them some particulars, which they would do well to observe. He therefore proposed to write to them, that they should abstain from meats which had been offered to idols, and polluted in that abominable worship, that they might decidedly show their entire renunciation and abhorrence of idolatry, and also to caution them against fornication. This was not in general held in such abhorrence among the Gentiles as it ought to be, and it was especially connected

with their idolatrous feasts; the new converts might therefore be in danger of being seduced into it, to the dishonour of their profession, the injury of their own souls, and the great detriment of domestic comfort and union in the worship of God. This was no doubt a moral injunction, independent of the ceremonial law; and so was the prohibition to eat of things sacrificed to idols, as connected with its consequences, being in reality communion with idolaters in idolatry. (*Marg. Ref.*) And no doubt it is in force at this day, as a command of the moral law, and must be charged on the consciences of all such as live among idolaters. The subsequent injunctions are of another nature, and enforced by other reasons. The law of Moses had long been published in the several cities where the Gospel was then planted, being read in their synagogues every sabbath; the people therefore every where knew that the eating of blood was prohibited very strictly. This prohibition was given from reverence to the blood of the sacrifices, which being the life of the animal, was as it were the essence of the atonement, as typical of that of Christ. It would therefore have needlessly grieved and stumbled the Jewish converts, and prevented their friendly intercourse with their brethren, and further prejudiced the unconverted Jews against the Gospel, if the Gentile converts had shown so open a disregard to the solemn sacrifices, which were still offered at the temple. This seems to have been the reason of this restriction: as long as the sacrifices continued to be offered, we may suppose that it was observed; but as "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused," as there is no further intimation to this effect in the apostolical epistles, and as the reason of it, which is here annexed, hath long since ceased, so we must conclude that we are left as free in this as in other similar matters. The permission given the Israelites to sell the bodies of animals, which died of themselves, to their heathen neighbours, shows, that the restriction of eating blood was ceremonial, not moral. They would not have been allowed to tempt the Gentiles to immorality.—(*Marg. Ref.*) It has been observed, that if Peter, instead of James, had said, "My sentence is," (19.) it would have given a more plausible argument for Peter's supremacy, than any which the Papists can adduce.

have preached the word of the Lord,
and see how they do.

37 And Barnabas determined to take
with them "John, whose surname was
Mark.

38 But Paul thought not good to take
him with them, * who departed from them
from Pamphylia, and went not with them
to the work.

39 And the contention was so sharp
between them, that they departed asunder
one from the other : and so Barnabas took
Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus :

40 And Paul chose Silas, and de-
parted, being recommended by the bre-
thren unto the grace of God.

41 And he went through Syria and
Cilicia, confirming the churches.

V. 36—41. The primary view of Paul, in proposing to Barnabas another journey into the distant places, was, to revisit the Churches which they had planted, and see whether they went on prosperously : but doubtless he meant also to seek further opportunities of spreading the Gospel. Barnabas seems to have been too partial to his nephew, and perhaps Paul was too severe with him. Doubtless they were both betrayed into undue warmth and pertinacity, which shows the remains of human depravity in the hearts of the best of men ; and the impartiality of the inspired historian in recording it, is worthy of notice. Thus these two fellow-labourers parted, probably to meet no more on earth ; neither of them, however, remitted any thing of his zeal and diligence, on account of this disagreement, so that two missions were sent forth instead of one, both of which it is probable were recommended to God by the prayers of the brethren, yet the language here used seems more directly applicable to Paul, whose conduct on this occasion was best approved. We read nothing further in the history concerning Barnabas ; doubtless he laboured and prospered to the end of his life, but the rest of this book relates primarily to the ministry and sufferings of St. Paul and his companions.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—11.

The great enemy of God and man is continually devising measures for obstructing the success of the Gospel. For this purpose he endeavours to make divisions among those who preach and profess it, and to corrupt its purity, and obscure the glory of divine grace in it, by plausibly substituting another foundation, or by introducing such alterations or appendages, as are calculated to mislead or discourage unestablished inquirers. In these attempts he avails himself of the errors, bigotry, and prejudices of well-meaning persons, and of the ambition and selfishness of false brethren. Wise and good men will avoid controversy and disputation, as far as they can, yet they must not determine against them, or condemn them indiscriminately ; for when false teachers come in unawares to subvert men's souls, when the fundamental truths of the Gospel are opposed or perverted, and the principles of men are poisoned by pernicious tenets, we ought to "contend earnestly," (though in meekness,) "for the faith once delivered to the saints ;" and to decline controversy in such circumstances argues lukewarmness and cowardice, rather than meekness and wisdom. When fair argument and scriptural evidence fail to convince gainsayers, we must be careful that we be not seduced to use improper

means of conducting the disputation ; and if some method of preserving peace and truth can be suggested, we should submit to any personal inconvenience, or apparent degradation, to accomplish so desirable an end. Sometimes the opinion of those "who seem to be pillars," will go further than any arguments ; and we may fairly in such circumstances appeal to their judgment, in order to stop the mouths of those who pretend to speak their sentiments, and to satisfy such as may have imbibed prejudices, which close their minds to our arguments. But we ought never to be so engaged about any single question, as to neglect opportunities of declaring what God hath done for or by us, or of being helpers to the joy of our brethren in every place. It may be useful for the ministers and disciples of Christ to meet together, to consider any controverted subject, in order that they may form the more accurate and decided judgment upon it ; yet great humility, prudence, temper, candour, and integrity, are requisite, to prevent such conventions from degenerating into party-cabals, or scenes of contention and confusion. This hath brought ecclesiastical councils and synods into general disrepute ; and indeed little good can be expected from them, when they are very numerous, or when they are so constituted as to give an opening for political contests, or party-interests ; yet select companies meeting in the fear of God, and in the spirit of humble prayer for divine teaching, may help each other to investigate truth, and in deciding difficult and important questions. We should, however, remember, that the apostles themselves assigned the reasons of their determinations, and did not require the elders and Churches to submit to their authority, without knowing the grounds on which they went ; and in such discussions we shall frequently find, that, by examining the source of the subject in question, it will appear to have been already decided by the Lord himself, and that it would be tempting him to debate the matter any further. We sinners of the Gentiles have great cause to bless God, that we have heard the Gospel. May we have that faith, which the great Searcher of hearts approves, and attests by the seal of the Holy Spirit ! Then our hearts and consciences will be purified from the pollution and guilt of sin, and we shall not want any of those burdensome superstitions, which many have attempted to impose on the necks of the disciples, instead of the abrogated ceremonial law. Those ordinances which God hath appointed as means of grace to our souls, and of rendering him the worship due to his name, we shall delight in attending on, accounting his service perfect freedom, and the Redeemer's yoke easy and pleasant, and we shall adopt or reject regulations merely circumstantial, as they

CHAP. XVI.

Paul, having circumcised Timothy, takes him for an assistant, 1—3. They deliver the apostolic decrees to the churches, which are established and increased in numbers, 4, 5. Having gone through Phrygia and Galatia, the Spirit forbids them to preach in Asia and Bithynia, and they come to Troas, 6—8. A vision directs them to go into Macedonia, and they arrive at Philippi, 9—12. Lydia, being converted, entertains them, 14, 15. Paul casts out a spirit of divination, 16—18; and in consequence he and Silas are seized, scourged, imprisoned, and put in the stocks, 19—24. They pray, and sing praises; and an earthquake opens the doors of the prison and looses their bonds, 25, 26. The jailer, pre-

vented by Paul from killing himself, is converted, with his family, 27—34. Paul and Silas, being set at liberty, refuse to leave the prison, till requested by the magistrates, 35—39. They comfort the brethren and depart, 40.

THEN came he ^a to Derbe and Lystra; and, behold, a certain disciple was there, ^b named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, ^c which was a Jewess, and believed: ^d but his father was a Greek:

2 Which ^e was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

3 Him ^f would Paul have to go forth with him; ^g and took and circumcised him, because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

xiv 6. R. 21.
Tim iii 11.
xxviii 14. xxviii 5.
xix 22. xx. 4.
Rom. xvi. 21.
1 Cor. iv. 17.
Phil. i. 1. ii. 19.
Col. i. 1. 1.
1 Thes. i. 1. iii.
2. 2 Thes. i. 1.
1 Tim. i. 2.
2 Tim. i. 2.
Heb. xiii. 23.
1 Tim. i. 3. iii.
15. 16.
d xiv 1. E. xxviii.
2. 1 Cor. vi. 14.
xvi 3. 1 Tim.
iii 5. v. 10. 27.
2 Tim. iii 15.
xix 21. 2 Tim.
iii 11.
xxviii 37. 40.
h xv. 29. 21.
1 Cor. xii. 19.
ix 20. Gal. ii.
3 v. 2. 6.

appear to promote edification, or the contrary; but we shall place no dependence on any of these things, believing that we shall be saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus, even as these primitive Christians were.

V. 12—31.

That is undoubtedly the way of eternal life, to which God of old affixed the seal of miracles, which he confirms to us by the testimony of prophets and apostles, and which he blesses, for the conversion of sinners in every age and nation. Thus did he first visit the Gentiles, to take a people from among them for the honour of his name; and thus is he building the tabernacle, and setting up the kingdom, of the Son of David in every part of the earth. He who doeth all these things carries on his work according to the counsel of his own will; for known unto him were all his works, from the beginning of the world: his providential dispensations illustrate and fulfil his word, and it doth not behove us to attempt to modify his operations in conformity with our limited or prejudiced apprehensions. We should not therefore trouble *those* about mere forms or notions, who are evidently turned unto God; much less ought we to impose on them by authority, or as necessary to salvation, such things as never, at any time, could plead a divine sanction. It may, however, be proper to warn them to keep at a distance from all occasions or appearances of those evils, to which they were before most addicted, or to which they are now most likely to be tempted, and strenuously to caution them to use their Christian liberty with such moderation and prudence, as the good of their brethren, their friendly intercourse with them, and the success of the Gospel, may render expedient.

V. 32—41.

They who possess influence and authority, should support their faithful brethren, whose usefulness may be hin-

dered by the prejudices gone forth against them; they should embrace opportunities of decidedly speaking in the commendation of upright characters, and against those who trouble the Church, and subvert men's souls; and, if other things are equal, such persons, who have ventured and suffered most for the name of the Lord Jesus, are entitled to most respect and affection from their brethren. Unanimity amongst ministers and Christians gives great weight to their determinations; what they do with one accord may often be considered as the mind and work of the Holy Spirit; especially when their counsels and measures are evidently consonant to Scripture, and conducive to the peace and purity of the Church; and when the whole is managed in the spirit of unassuming love; but arbitrary injunctions and vindictive anathemas have long distinguished the proceedings of anti-christian counsels from those of this Christian synod. Instructions, argument, and exhortations are the proper means of producing conviction and obedience, and of confirming men in the faith; and Christian liberty, soberly explained and used, is conducive to consolation and gratitude. Whilst we approve and imitate the zeal, love, and indefatigable diligence and courage of the apostles, in proposing to revisit the Churches where they had been so persecuted, we must also note the effects of human imperfection in the best of men; that we may watch and pray against all occasions of contention, and all sharpness and pertinacity in contending with our brethren. Yet we should also admire the wisdom of God, in disappointing the devices of the enemy; and over-ruling the infirmity of the apostles, to promote the cause of the Gospel; and we should copy their example, in not allowing any personal differences to take us off from, or to make us negligent or unfaithful in, the work, to which the Lord hath severally called us.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI. V. 1—3. Timothy had been piously educated, and acquainted with the Scriptures from his

xx. 6 28, 29.

xxv. 41. 1 Chr.

xx. 20. Is. vii.

9. Rom. xvi. 25.

1 Cor. xv. 59.

Gal. v. 1. Eph.

ix. 13-16. Col.

ii. 5, 7. 1 Thes.

iii. 2. 13. 2 Thes.

iii. 16, 17. Heb.

xiii. 9. 20. 21.

1 Pet. v. 10.

xiii. 47. iv. 4. v.

14. vi. 7. ix. 31.

ix. 21. xii. 24.

xiii. 45. 49. xix.

18-21.

m. li. 10. xxvii. 25.

xxviii. 2. 1 Cor.

xvi. 1. Gal. i. 2.

xvi. 1. 2 Tim. iv.

10. 1 Pet. i. 12.

o. 7. 1 Pet. i. 12.

xiii. 2-4. xx. 29.

Chr. vi. 7-9.

1 Cor. xii. 11.

Heb. xi. 8.

p. xix. 10. 25, 27.

xx. 4. 16. 2 Cor.

i. 8. 2 Tim. i.

13. 1 Pet. i. 1.

Rev. i. 4. 11.—

4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

5 And ^k so were the churches established in the faith, ^l and increased in number daily.

6 Now, when they had gone throughout ^m Phrygia, and ⁿ the region of Galatia, and were ^o forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in ^p Asia,

7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into ^q Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

8 And they, passing by Mysia, came down to ^r Troas.

q 1 Pet. i. 1.—r 11. xx. 5. 2 Cor. ii. 12. 2 Tim. iv. 13.

9 And ^a a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There stood a man of ^b Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, ^c Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

10 And after he had seen the vision, ^d immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them.

11 Therefore, loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;

12 And from thence to ^e Philippi, which is the ^f chief city of that part of Macedonia, and ^g a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

of those regions, that peace might be secured among the brethren, and no unnecessary burden laid upon the Gentile converts, they delivered to their custody the decrees, which were determined by the apostles, &c. at Jerusalem. The several Churches therefore, being watered by such faithful labourers, and encouraged with so favourable a decision, were much confirmed in their adherence to the Christian faith, and increased more and more in numbers. (Doddridge.)

V. 6-12. It seems to have been at this time, that Paul preached so successfully in Galatia, as to found those flourishing Churches, to which he afterwards wrote his epistle. He probably intended to go regularly from place to place in that neighbourhood, planting the Gospel as he proceeded: but by an immediate revelation the Holy Spirit forbade him and his companions to preach in the proconsular Asia, or in Bithynia; these were distinct parts of Asia Minor, in which the several cities and regions before mentioned were situated. It was the will of God, that the apostle and his companions should proceed to a still greater distance from Judea; in the mean time the Gospel would be gradually diffusing its influence in those parts by other means: and we find that soon after, flourishing Churches were established in those very places, where they were now prohibited to preach. They therefore went on to Troas, on the coast of the Egean Sea: and whilst they were waiting at that city to know the will of God concerning them; Paul had a vision, from which it was assuredly concluded, that they were to cross the sea into Europe, to preach the Gospel to the inhabitants of Macedonia. Accordingly they took ship, and passed by the usual course to Philippi, which was a principal city, if not the chief city in that division of Macedonia; and a Roman colony, being mostly inhabited by Roman citizens, who had various privileges, and were governed by their own laws. The historian on this occasion begins to speak in the first person plural, saying "we endeavoured, &c." hence we learn that he attended Paul in this voyage, and probably in most of his subsequent labours; though he modestly avoided mentioning any thing particular concerning himself. The Spirit, &c. (7.) Some manuscripts, and many ancient versions and citations read, "the Spirit of

youth; and had doubtless been brought to believe in Christ, when Paul and Barnabas were before at Lystra.—As he bore an excellent character among his fellow-Christians, and was endowed with very promising abilities, St. Paul chose him to accompany him in his travels and labours: but as his father was an uncircumcised Gentile, it was known that he had not been circumcised in his infancy; and he therefore judged it expedient for him to receive circumcision, previous to his entrance on his public ministry. Not that this was at all needful for him as a gentile convert, or that the apostle thought the Jewish believers were bound to observe the ceremonial law: but lest the knowledge of his father, as a Gentile, should prejudice the Jews in the adjacent cities against Paul and his ministry; if they had supposed that he had taken an uncircumcised person, to be his intimate companion and assistant; and likewise exclude Timothy from preaching in the synagogues, for which he seems to have been peculiarly qualified. He therefore thus far condescended to the prejudices of the Jews: though some time before at Jerusalem, he would not agree to the circumcision of Titus, when it was considered as a requisite for salvation. (Marg. Ref.) 'After this, Paul laid his hands upon him, and set him apart for the ministerial office, conferring on him extraordinary gifts, (2 Tim. i. 6.) which were attended with prophecies of his future usefulness. (1 Tim. i. 13. iv. 14.) The apostle always openly avowed, that the Gentiles were free from the yoke of the Mosaic ceremonies, and that the Jews were not to expect salvation by them,—that they were not in conscience bound to observe them at all, except in cases where the omission of them would give offence.' (Doddridge.) Grotius observes, that this was probably the beginning of Luke's acquaintance with Timothy. The marginal references show, that St. Paul, in his former circuit, had been the instrument of his conversion: and the apostle's manner in speaking of the persecutions which he endured at Lystra, &c. (though before he wrote this, he had gone through very many others;) implies that Timothy had witnessed his sufferings in that neighbourhood, and would be peculiarly affected by recollecting them.

V. 4, 5. 'As they passed through the several cities

13 ¶ And ^a on the ^{*} sabbath we went out of the city by a river-side, ^b where prayer was wont to be made: ^c and we sat down, and ^d spake unto the women which resorted *thither*.

14 And a certain woman, named ^e Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which ^f worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

15 And ^g when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, ^h come into my house, and abide *there*.

And she constrained us. 16 And it came to pass, ⁱ as we went to prayer, a certain damsel ^j possessed with a spirit of ^k divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, ^l These men are ^m the servants of ⁿ the most high God, which shew unto us ^o the way of salvation.

18 And this did she many days. But Paul, ^p being grieved, turned, and said to the spirit, ^q I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

19 And when we were come to Thessalonica, ^r Paul went into the synagogue, and ^s talked with the Jews, and ^t with the Greeks, and ^u with the chief of the synagogue.

20 And when he had reasoned with them some days, ^v they were converted to him, ^w and of the women, ^x of the name of Lydia, ^y and of her household.

21 And when they were baptized, ^z they besought Paul, ^{aa} saying, ^{ab} If thou hast judged us to be faithful to the Lord, ^{ac} come into our house, and ^{ad} abide *there*.

22 And when she had opened her house, ^{ae} she besought Paul, ^{af} saying, ^{ag} If thou hast judged us to be faithful to the Lord, ^{ah} come into our house, and ^{ai} abide *there*.

23 And when she had opened her house, ^{aj} she besought Paul, ^{ak} saying, ^{al} If thou hast judged us to be faithful to the Lord, ^{am} come into our house, and ^{an} abide *there*.

24 And when she had opened her house, ^{ao} she besought Paul, ^{ap} saying, ^{aq} If thou hast judged us to be faithful to the Lord, ^{ar} come into our house, and ^{as} abide *there*.

25 And when she had opened her house, ^{at} she besought Paul, ^{au} saying, ^{av} If thou hast judged us to be faithful to the Lord, ^{aw} come into our house, and ^{ax} abide *there*.

26 And when she had opened her house, ^{ay} she besought Paul, ^{az} saying, ^{ba} If thou hast judged us to be faithful to the Lord, ^{bb} come into our house, and ^{bc} abide *there*.

27 And when she had opened her house, ^{bd} she besought Paul, ^{be} saying, ^{bf} If thou hast judged us to be faithful to the Lord, ^{bg} come into our house, and ^{bh} abide *there*.

28 And when she had opened her house, ^{bi} she besought Paul, ^{bj} saying, ^{bk} If thou hast judged us to be faithful to the Lord, ^{bl} come into our house, and ^{bm} abide *there*.

“Jesus.” *A man*, &c. (9.) Some think that the apostle knew the person who appeared to him in vision to be a Macedonian, by his dress or language; and others think that he resembled some one with whom Paul was acquainted. It does not appear from the history, that any of the Macedonians were previously inquiring after salvation, (as Cornelius had been,) or disposed to seek direction and help. But the Lord purposed to call many of them by his grace, and directed his servants by this vision to the proper means of accomplishing his gracious designs. —Colony. (12.) ‘The critics were long puzzled to find any mention of Philippi as a Roman colony; but ‘some coins, (dug up, I think, within the last century,) show, that a colony was planted there by Julius Caesar, and afterwards much augmented by Augustus.’ (Dodridge.)

V. 13—15. This is the first account, transmitted to us, of the Gospel being preached in Europe; though the Church at Rome, it is probable, was planted before this time. There were Jews residing in most, if not all, the cities which the apostles and evangelists visited, though they appeared to have been but few at Philippi. It seems they had not a synagogue with rulers; but there was a small oratory without the city, by the river-side, where a few people were accustomed to assemble for the worship of God on the sabbath-days. Thither the apostle and his friends resorted, and took the opportunity of discoursing to the women, concerning the Gospel of Christ; for it does not appear that there were any men in the assembly. Among the rest there was a native of Thyatira, a city of Asia, who resided at Philippi, to traffic in purple clothes, which were then in great estimation. She seems to have been of Gentile extraction, but proselyted to the Jewish religion, and the Lord was pleased to open her heart to attend on and believe the apostle’s doctrine. This implies, that pride, prejudice, the love of sin, and the love of the world, close the heart against the truth of God, till his grace makes way for their admission into the understanding and affections. (Marg. Ref.) Thus she was led to embrace the Gospel, and was baptized with her household, the adult part of which no doubt were instructed in Chris-

tianity along with her. There is no proof that there were any children in her family, though it is probable there were; the Syriac version indeed renders it “the children of her house,” but this only shows the sentiments of those who formed that early translation. After this she besought the apostle and his company to lodge in her house, for probably they before were but poorly accommodated; and by her urgent invitations she overcame their reluctance to put her to so much trouble and expense. —By this it appears that she was a person in affluent circumstances. Many others seem about this time, or soon afterwards, to have been converted. *Opened.* (14.) ‘By the grace of God she received the faith.’ (Hammond.)

V. 16—18. As the apostle and his friends went from the house of Lydia to the oratory above mentioned, they were met by a female slave, who was influenced by an evil spirit to utter ambiguous predictions, or divinations, after the manner of the priestesses of the Pythian Apollo. Thus she had acquired great reputation, as a kind of oracle, or fortune-teller, for making strange discoveries, which were probably accompanied by various agitations and distortions of body, and a peculiar kind of voice and articulation, for these were common on such occasions. By this practice she brought her masters a considerable gain, and became exceedingly valuable to them. But being instigated by the evil spirit, who desired to discredit and bring into suspicion the ministry and miracles of the apostle and his coadjutors, she cried aloud, that “they were the servants of the most High God, who came to show men the way of salvation.” For some days Paul waited, perhaps to see in what manner the Lord would silence so disgraceful a testimony to his truth; at length, being grieved by the damsel’s perseverance, he cast out the evil spirit by the power of Christ, and she returned to the full possession of her faculties, so that she could utter no more divinations; perhaps she was converted to Christianity. This transaction demonstrates, that such pretensions are not always human impostures, but are sometimes real satanical operations. Had this damsel’s divination been a mere juggle between her and her masters, the command of the apostle could not have detected it, or prevented

Y. xix. 25, 26.
2 Tim. vi. 10.
2 k. 16. xiv. 5
19. xv. 26 xviii
12, 13. xlii. 30
Matt. x. 16, 17.
xiv. 9 Mark
xii. 9.

9. Dr. court

xxviii. 2. xix. 34.
Ezra. iv. 12-15.

Ezra. iv. 12-15.
Ezra. iv. 12-15.

xxviii. 2. xix. 34.
Ezra. iv. 12-15.

xxviii. 2. xix. 34.
Ezra. iv. 12-15.

xxviii. 2. xix. 34.
Ezra. iv. 12-15.

xxviii. 2. xix. 34.
Ezra. iv. 12-15.

xxviii. 2. xix. 34.
Ezra. iv. 12-15.

xxviii. 2. xix. 34.
Ezra. iv. 12-15.

xxviii. 2. xix. 34.
Ezra. iv. 12-15.

xxviii. 2. xix. 34.
Ezra. iv. 12-15.

xxviii. 2. xix. 34.
Ezra. iv. 12-15.

xxviii. 2. xix. 34.
Ezra. iv. 12-15.

xxviii. 2. xix. 34.
Ezra. iv. 12-15.

19 And when her masters saw that
the hope of their gains was gone,
they caught Paul and Silas, and drew
them into the market-place unto the
rulers,

20 And brought them to the magis-
trates, saying, These men, being Jews,
do exceedingly trouble our city,

21 And teach customs which are not
lawful for us to receive, neither to ob-
serve, being Romans.

22 And the multitude rose up to-
gether against them; and the magistrates
rent off their clothes, and commanded to
beat them.

23 And when they had laid many
stripes upon them, they cast them into
prison, charging the jailer to keep them
safely:

24 Who, having received such a charge,

thrust them into the inner prison, and
made their feet fast in the stocks.

25 And at midnight Paul and Silas
prayed, and sang praises unto God:
and the prisoners heard them.

26 And suddenly there was a great
earthquake, so that the foundations of
the prison were shaken: and immediately
all the doors were opened, and every
one's bands were loosed.

27 And the keeper of the prison
awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the
prison-doors open, he drew out his
sword, and would have killed himself,
supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

28 But Paul cried with a loud voice,
saying, Do thyself no harm; for we are
all here.

them from carrying on the deception; nor could he at once, or indeed at all, have convinced the whole multitude, and the city, that it was a mere imposture, for men are not easily undeceived in such matters. And if mere jugglers had been convinced that Paul and his friends were indeed the servants of the true God, and teachers of the way of salvation, they would never have ventured to address them in this manner. But as the woman was really instigated, and, in a sense, inspired, by an evil spirit, and as in the paroxysms of her distraction, and amidst strange and wild actions and gestures, she actually uttered such things, as were apparent prophecies and wonderful discoveries, (such as Satan could at any time make by his foresight and conjectural knowledge, if God would permit him); the change was manifest, when the dispossession took place, and all concerned were fully satisfied that she could divine no longer, and that it was in vain to apply to her for that purpose.

V. 19-24. The owners of this damsel, being sensible that no further lucre could be made by her, were exceedingly exasperated by their loss; and when they had seized on Paul and Silas, and accused them before the magistrates as disturbers of the peace, and teachers of unlawful customs, the multitude also, being enraged at the loss of their prophetess, joined in the tumultuous accusation. Whereas, had the apostle satisfactorily detected an artful impostor, they, who had been convinced of the cheat, would have been enraged at those who had duped them of their money, and not at him who had undeceived them. It does not appear that the Jews were forbidden to exercise their religion at Philippi, or in other cities of the Roman empire, at this time, so that the accusation was altogether malicious and groundless. Yet the magistrates, concurring with the popular fury, violently rent off the garments of Paul and Silas, and having severely scourged them without any previous trial, they cast them into prison, and charged the jailer to keep them safely, as if they had been dan-

gerous and artful criminals, who would certainly effect their escape, if possible. And he, being probably a man of a severe temper, and desirous of pleasing his employers, and perhaps despising them on account of their religion, cast them into the inner place, or the darkest and most noisome part of the dungeon, and there fastened their feet in the stocks, which must have rendered their situation very painful. Thus they were left with their wounds undressed, in the cold and dark dungeon, without any refreshment, to wear away the night, expecting the next day to be further proceeded against. But neither they, nor any of the persons concerned, thought of the gracious design, for which the Lord had permitted these sufferings to come on them. *Gone.* (19.) The same word is used, as before, when the evil spirit went out, 'as if the hope of their gains had removed from them along with the unclean spirit.' (*Beza.*) *Being Jews.* (20.) The Christians were here confounded with the unconverted Jews, as both protested against the Pagan worship. But had the worship of *JEHOVAH* been contrary to any Roman law then in force, and actually carried into execution, no Jews could have remained in any of the cities where colonies were planted. It appears that some statutes to this effect had been enacted, but doubtless it was generally found impracticable to execute them, and so they became obsolete, except when an occasion was sought of gratifying malice and cruelty by persecution. *Stocks.* (24.) Literally, "They made their feet safe unto the wood;" in what way this was done is not agreed among learned men, but doubtless the posture of Paul and Silas was very uneasy. Timothy, and Luke, and the rest of the company, as less noticed, were exempted from this severe trial.

V. 25-28. It might have been expected, that Paul and Silas would have vented their feelings in bitter lamentations and exclamations against the cruelty and injustice of the treatment which they had received. Yet at mid-

iv. 21 v. 40 Ps.
xxxvi. 10 Jer.
v. 22.

35 ¶ And ¹ when it was day, the magistrates sent the sergeants, saying, Let those men go.

36 And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now, therefore, depart, and go in peace.

37 But Paul said unto them, ¹ They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily; but ² let them come themselves and fetch us out.

R. xv. 23 Ex. iv. 18
Judg. xviii.
1 Sam. i. 17.
Ex. 42 xxv. 25
xxix. 7 2 Kings
v. 19 Mar.
24. John xiv. 27
120-24. xxi. 25
—26 Ps. lvi.
1. 12 xxix. 1
2. xciv. 20, 21.
Prov. xx. 11.
Dan. ii. 23, 26
Matt. x. 16.

38 And the sergeants told these words unto the magistrates: ² and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.

39 And they ³ came and besought them, ⁴ and brought them out, ⁵ and desired them to depart out of the city.

40 And they went out of the prison, ⁶ and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, ⁷ they comforted them, and departed.

xviii. 29 Matt.
xiv. 9. xxi. 46.
o. 16. xiv. 14. x. 14
23 ix. 14. Mic.
vii. 9, 10. Rev.
iii. 9.
o. 16. vi. 16. 29
Matt. viii. 24.
Mark v. 17, 18.

x. 14. iv. 23 xii.
12-17
x. 22. 2 Cor.
i. 3-7 iv. 8-
12 16-18. 1.
Thes. ii. 2, 3.

hath already been shown, that the covenant, and the meaning of these two ordinances, were substantially the same. (*Notes, Gen. xvii.*) Such passages, alone, will not indeed prove this; but the language, concerning the baptism of believers and their households, so much accords to that concerning the circumcision of Abraham and his household, that, in connexion with other scriptures, with the general and early use of infant-baptism in the primitive Church, and with the consideration that we do not read of one single instance, in which the children of Christian parents were baptized adult, it must be allowed strongly to countenance the sentiments and practice of pædo-baptists; though we suppose, that the change of the initiatory ordinance, as far as infants were concerned, was introduced silently and gradually, like that respecting the sabbath, the Jewish converts still circumcising their male children, to avoid giving needless offence to the unconverted Jews. It seems also probable, to me at least, that Paul and Silas, in their painful condition, and in the jailer's house, did not baptize him and his family by immersion.

V. 35—40. Perhaps the earthquake, and some reports of what had taken place at the prison, concurred in dismaying the magistrates from proceeding further against Paul and Silas; they were, however, no doubt conscious, that they had done more than they could justify, and they therefore sent their sergeants or beaules to give orders to the jailer to release them, which he delivered with great joy and affection. But St. Paul, though willing to suffer for the cause of Christ, and not at all disposed to avenge himself, yet judged it proper to remind these iniquitous magistrates that they had acted illegally, and might be severely punished for it; for this would tend to procure more equitable treatment for the Christians, and indeed for the other citizens, in future. In the tumult of the proceedings against him and Silas the day before, they had not thought it expedient to plead their privilege as Romans, or no notice had been taken of their plea; but Paul now charged them with scourging them publicly, and imprisoning them in a cruel and ignominious manner, though they had not been convicted of any crime, and though they could prove themselves Roman citizens. And now the magistrates meant to set them at liberty in an underhand manner, that they might conceal their own injustice; but they did not choose to go away under the imputation of having deserved such punishment; if they would therefore have him and his friends to depart, they must

come themselves, acknowledge their fault, and dismiss them in a more honourable manner. This message might well alarm the magistrates; for as no man could claim the privilege of a citizen falsely, without exposing himself to the severest punishment, so a prosecution for such illegal treatment would have subjected the magistrates to heavy penalties, and incapacitated them from ever again exercising authority, if not to capital punishment. They therefore came, and submissively entreated Paul and Silas to leave the city, lest further commotions should be excited, in which they might not be able to protect them; and as the apostle by no means intended to require reparation for the injury, he and Silas went to the house of Lydia, and, having visited and encouraged the other new converts, they departed. The epistle to the Philippians shows what a flourishing church was at this time planted, and in what a happy manner these troubles terminated.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—12.



The wisdom that is from above is peculiarly requisite, in order to know when, and how far, we may bear with men's prejudices, in order to do them good, and when we must resolutely protest against them. But if a man has it at heart to carry his point as far as possible, and if he is delivered from the prevalence of pride, selfishness, obstinacy, and moroseness, he will be directed by circumstances, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, to act according to the word of God; yet his conduct will often appear incongruous, and even inconsistent, to the superficial observer. The greatest precaution should be used, that the ministers of Christ be men of good report, lest prejudices against them in particular should be added to the carnal enmity of the human heart, to prevent their success, and that such as "are of the contrary part may" have no evil thing to say of them; and scriptural regulations, in this and similar concerns, tend exceedingly to the establishment of believers in the faith, and to the increase of the Church in numbers. Though we have no expectation of being directed by immediate revelation, in the various actions of our lives, yet, whilst we act according to the best of our judgment, in obedience to the word, and dependence on the Spirit of God, we shall find circumstances, apparently casual, operate as prohibitions and directions, subverting our plans, and substituting others in their stead. "He that holds the stars in his right hand,"

CHAP. XVII.

Paul preaches at Thessalonica, and some believe, both Jews and Greeks, 1—4. The unbelieving Jews raise disturbances, and trouble the rulers, 5—9. Paul and Silas are sent by night to Berea, 10. The Bereans ingeniously attend to the word, and search the scriptures daily; therefore many believe, 11, 12. The Jews of Thessalonica follow Paul and Silas to Berea to stir up persecution, 13; Paul goes to Athens, 14, 15. His zeal is excited by

the excessive idolatry of that city; and he disputes in the synagogue and in the forum with the philosophers, 16—18. He is brought before the Areopagus, 19—21. He preaches the living God, the Creator and Lord of all, as hitherto unknown to the Athenians, 22—29. He calls on them to repent; because God would judge the world by Jesus, whom he had raised from the dead, 30, 31. Some mock, others purpose to hear him again, and a few believe, 32—34.

directs his ministers to the several places, where he means to employ them; and often contrary to their intentions and expectations. By whatever means we are satisfied of the Lord's will respecting us, we should prepare for obedience, to whatever hardship, labour, and peril, it may expose us; and they who go in simplicity, faithfulness, and affection, to preach the Gospel among ignorant or careless sinners, do the most for their help and benefit that man can do; though it seldom happens, that such persons are forward to invite them. The deplorable condition, however, of our fellow-creatures, in very many parts of the world, and even their insensibility to their own danger and misery, ought to stimulate our exertions to carry or send them effectual help, and to aid by our labours, contributions, and prayers, every scriptural attempt for that purpose. Nor should we forget that it was this generous and tender compassion for the inhabitants of this quarter of the globe, without any desire or request from us or our ancestors, which induced the apostles and evangelists to "put their lives in their hands," and come over to help us. And could they now address us, it would probably be in these few but emphatical words, "Go thou" and do likewise."

V. 13—24.

Whilst the servants of Christ wait upon him in his ordinances, he will find them some opening to speak in his name; nor should the most eminent minister be averse to preach to a very small number of the most obscure persons. The Lord alone can open the heart for the reception and belief of his word, and true faith is always attended by love to the servants of Christ; his genuine disciples desire to approve themselves faithful stewards, to "use hospitality without grudging," and to employ their substance in supporting and promoting the Gospel; and they will commonly be a blessing to their households also.—The powers of darkness vary their methods of prejudicing the minds of men against the light of the Gospel, or drawing off their attention from it. Lying miracles and useless divinations are far more saleable in this evil world, than the truths and precepts of God would be, if they could be thus communicated; and impostures in great variety have been used to deceive mankind, and to set them against true religion. Satan, the father of lies, can declare the most important truths, when it will subserve

his purpose of deception and murder; and if he were permitted, he could do more mischief by ingeniously connecting the doctrines of the Gospel with pernicious errors and immoral practice, than by every species of superstition, persecution, and infidelity. Much he actually effects in this way, by means of antinomian, enthusiastic, and scandalous preachers, who, being confounded with the real servants of Christ, bring them also into contempt and abhorrence, with thousands of superficial observers. But we must strenuously disclaim such coalitions; and commendations from bad and suspicious characters should more excite our grief and indignation, than all their calumnies and reproaches. The conversion of sinners, from the power of Satan unto God, often deprives those connected with them of the gains which they made by their vices; thus the Gospel interferes with the worldly interests of those who will do any base thing for money, and this concurs with other principles in exciting their rage and persecution. So that they, who do more good than others do, by drawing sinners off from the service of the devil, may expect to be reviled as exceedingly troubling the city; and whilst they teach men to fear God, to repent of sin, to believe in Christ, and to live sober, righteous, and godly lives, they will be accused of teaching customs that are illegal, impracticable, or ruinous to the community! Too often indeed the laws of the state interfere with those of God, and the customs of the world contradict the wisdom and holiness of his service; yet interested opposers frequently make these things a mere pretence for persecution, whilst they are actuated only by avarice, ambition, or revenge. The vilest of malefactors may therefore expect more favourable treatment than zealous ministers, who will not let sinners go on unmolested in the ways of destruction. Pride, cruelty, contempt, and enmity, often concur in uniting the mob and the magistrates against them. And if we, in this happy land, escape abuse, stripes, dungeons, the stocks, and the stake, we should bless God for our mild government, and that equitable constitution by which he secures us; and show our gratitude, by praying earnestly for our rulers, and by turning away our ears from those innovators, whom nothing but licentiousness can satisfy.

V. 25—34.

The consolations of God are neither few nor small to

xx. 4. xxi. 12.
Phil. iv. 16.
1 Thes. i. 1.
2 Thes. i. 1.
2 Tim. i. 10.
b. xiv. i. xv. 21.
xvi. 13.
c. Luke iv. 16.
John xviii. 20.
d. 10. 17. ix. 20.
e. 10. 13. xiv. 1.
f. xiv. 4. 13.
xix. 6.
g. xiv. 25. xxviii.
23. 1 Sam. xii.
7. Is. i. 10. Heb.
vi. x.
h. 16. 36. iii. 22.
i. 26. xii. 26. 39.
3. 4.

NOW, when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to ^a Thessalonica, ^b where was a synagogue of the Jews :

2 And Paul, ^c as his manner was, ^d went in unto them, and three sabbath-days ^e reasoned with them out of the scriptures ;

3 ^f Opening and alleging that ^g Christ

must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead : and that ^h this Jesus, ⁱ whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

4 And ^j some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and ^k Silas ; and of ^l the devout Greeks a great multitude, ^m and of the chief women not a few.

x. 22. 22. 40. — 1. 17. xiii. 43. xvi. 3. 14. xviii. 4. xix. 10. 17. xxi. 23. — m. 12. xiii. 50.

h. i. 26. ix. 22.
xviii. 20. Gal.
iii. 1.
* Or. whom said
he, I preach :
134. ii. 41. 42. 44.
iv. 23. v. 12 —
14. xiv. i. 4.
xxviii. 24. Prov.
ix. 6. xii. 20.
Cant. i. 7. 8. 20.
1. Zech. ii. 11.
viii. 20 — 24.
2 Cor. vi. 17.
16.
m. 12.

his suffering servants ; he gives them, in answer to their prayers, songs in the darkest night of tribulation, and in the most painful and dreary situation. What different persons are true Christians from what they are supposed to be ! They are happier than their most prosperous foes, who do their worst to make them miserable ; they need not to be strictly guarded, when God requires them to lodge in a prison, and walls, bolts, fetters, and keepers, are as nothing, when he wills them to be at liberty. In the most destitute state they have an omnipotent Friend, all nature stands ready to plead their cause, they are capable of becoming the best of benefactors in their most abject penury, and they are ready to do good to their most cruel enemies. How wonderful also are the varied methods of divine grace ! and how unlikely the objects of it ! The Lord sometimes brings sinners acquainted with himself, by means of their own crimes, and frequently through the sufferings of his servants. He gently, and by degrees, leads some into the knowledge and experience of his truth ; others he alarms by most tremendous dispensations, and snatches them by a gracious violence from the jaws of destruction ! Some are brought as near to hell as can be conceived, and then are suddenly rescued and made heirs of heaven ! Under the influence of their mad passions, many have been powerfully instigated by Satan, to plunge themselves into the bottomless pit by their own hands, just at the time when God was about to lead them into the ways of peace and felicity ! Thus he illustrates and demonstrates the sovereignty and efficacy of his grace, and gives occasion to praises and thanksgivings, which will be varied almost infinitely to all eternity. Whatever men have been, or have done to us, we ought if possible to prevent them from doing harm to themselves ; and we should be as earnest in this, on proper occasions, with respect to our greatest enemy, as if he were our brother and friend. — When sinners begin to inquire, under terror and distress of conscience, what they must do to be saved, they must all be answered in the same manner, whatever their previous character hath been. “ Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” None can be saved in any other way, none are excluded from salvation, who thus apply for it. Yet we should further instruct men, in respect of the object, nature, and effects of this faith, as we have opportunity ; and when sinners are thus converted, they will soon learn to love and honour those whom they before despised and hated ; they will alleviate the sufferings, which before they derided and augmented ; they will supply the wants of the indigent servants of God, and join themselves to them, by professing their faith in Christ, and venturing reproach and persecution for his

sake ; and they will desire that all who belong to them may be devoted to the Lord, and trained up in his service. When such fruits of faith begin evidently to appear, we need not be surprised, if terrors are speedily succeeded by confidence and joy in God ; and thus the events that menaced the most fatal consequences, often terminate in mutual congratulations and thanksgivings.

V. 35—40.

The servants of Christ should suffer persecution peaceably, and forgive injuries readily ; yet there may be cases, in which it will be proper for them to claim the protection of the laws, and to protest against the flagrant injustice of oppressive magistrates ; this may conduce to the public justice, the peace of the Church and of the community, and the credit of their profession. But when proper concessions are made by such as have acted illegally, Christians should never express personal resentment, or insist strictly upon reparation, but manifest a disinterested public spirit in every thing. Thus their enemies will be ashamed, silenced, or conciliated, the Lord will make them more than conquerors in every conflict, and instead of being cast down by their sufferings, they shall become the comforters of their brethren, who have been exempted from so large a share of tribulation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII. V. 1—4. Either no Jews resided at Amphipolis or Apollonia, or the apostle had no opportunity of preaching among them, at least no mention is any where made of his labours or success in those cities. He therefore journeyed on to the west, till he arrived at Thessalonica, the city in which the Roman governor resided, and there, according to custom, he went to the Synagogue, and reasoned from the Scriptures, to the Jews and other assembled worshippers, for three successive Sabbath-days : adducing many passages from the prophets, explaining their meaning, and thence evidently showing that the promised Messiah was to suffer death, and to rise again, and proving, from the exact fulfilment of these predictions in Jesus, that he was indeed that expected Deliverer. These reasonings did not convince the Jews in general, for their hearts were set upon a temporal kingdom ; yet some of them, and many of the worshipping Gentiles, believed, and joined the company of Paul, and among the rest several of the principal women in the city. From the Epistles to the Thessalonians it is evident, that the apostle was also remarkably successful among the idolatrous Gentiles, and that he continued here a considerable

5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of a Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;

7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cesar, saying, That there is another king, one Jesus.

8 And they troubled the people, and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.

9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto

Berea: who, coming thither, went into the synagogue of the Jews.

11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.

14 And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul, to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.

15 And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

time; but, after the first three sabbaths, it is probable that he left the Jews, and preached chiefly to the Gentiles.—As the historian says *they*, not *we*, it is conjectured that he stayed behind at Philippi, and did not join the company till some time after. Upon inspecting the history, I see nothing in it which negatives the supposition that St. Paul pursued the same plan at Thessalonica, which he adopted in other places, and that, though he resorted to the synagogue only three sabbath-days, yet he remained in the city, and in the exercise of his ministry among the Gentile citizens much longer, and until the success of his preaching had provoked the Jews to excite the tumult and insurrection by which he was driven away.—The Alexandrian and Cambridge manuscripts read *των σεβομενων, και ελθοντων πολλο πληθος* (*of the worshippers and of the Greeks a great multitude*.) 'If we be not allowed to change the present reading, may not the passage be considered as describing the success of St. Paul's discourses, during the three sabbath-days in which he preached in the synagogue? and that his application to the Gentiles at large, and his success among them, was posterior to this?' (*Paley*.) It appears from the epistles to the Thessalonians, that the Church at Thessalonica was chiefly formed of converted idolaters, and that St. Paul and his companions entered very particularly into the several parts of Christian doctrine and duty, in their practical instructions of the new converts, before they left the city; and in writing to the Philippians, the apostle observes, that they had sent twice to supply his wants, when at Thessalonica. (*Marg. Ref.*) These things show that he laboured in this city much longer, than the three sabbath-days here mentioned. The original word for believed in this passage, is often rendered *obeyed*, and that in the next verse for unbelieving, *disobedient*.

V. 5—9. The unbelieving Jews were enraged, and filled with envy or fiery zeal, because the apostle preached to the Gentiles that they might be saved. They therefore raised a mob from among the lowest and most licentious people in the city, who threw every thing into disorder, and then they violently assaulted the house, where the apostle and his company generally lodged, in order to drag them before the people as public disturbers. Jason, the owner of the house, seems to have been a relation of Paul, and a Jew. (*Rom. xvi. 21.*) Paul and his friends were absent, or concealed, at this time; the mob therefore dragged Jason and some other of the new converts before the magistrates, exclaiming, that the men of whom they had heard many reports, as having excited great confusion in every place, and who attempted innovations tending to turn the world upside down, and subvert the established order in religion and civil government, were at length come thither also, and that Jason had lodged them in his house, and had embraced their doctrine, as many others had done. But all these had broken the edicts of the Roman emperor, and rebelled against his authority, for they avowed that there was another king, one Jesus, who had been crucified, yet they avowed that he was risen again, and was exalted to a dominion far superior to that of Cesar, and entirely independent of him. This accusation gave much disquietude both to the magistrates, and the assembled multitudes; as they feared the displeasure of the emperor, if they should neglect such a charge, and yet they knew not how to proceed upon it. At present, however, they only required Jason and his friends to give security for their peaceable behaviour, and to make their appearance, if further called on.

V. 10—15. The Christians at Thessalonica judged it to be no longer safe for Paul and Silas to continue among

Ex. xxxi. 18,
20. Num. xiii.
6-11. 1 Kings
xix. 10. 14 Joh.
xviii. 2, 3. 16-
20. 1 Cor. x.
28. 158 Jer.
ix. 16. Mic. iii.
9. Mark iii. 5.
John i. 18-17.
2 Pet. ii. 7, 8.
Or. full of idols
22. Marg.
23. 2-4. 18-1-4.
p. x. xiii. 16. — q. Prov. i. 10-22. xiii. 1-4. 34. Jer. vi. 11. Matt. v. 1, 2. Mark xvi.
15. Luke xii. 3. 2 Tim. iii. 2. 5.

16 ¶ Now, while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city * wholly given to idolatry.

17 Therefore ^a disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with ^b the devout persons, and in the market ^c daily with them that met with him.

18 Then certain ^d philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, ^e encountered him. And some said, What will this ^f babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them ^g Jesus, and the resurrection.

Rom. i. 29. 1 Cor. i. 20. 21. Col. ii. 3. 16. v. 9. Mark ix. 14. Luke xii. 23. Or. base fellow. Prov. xiii. 9. xvi. 12. 1 Cor. iii. 18, 19. 131. xxvi. 16. Rom. xiv. 9, 10. 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.

them; and therefore they secretly sent them to Berea, an adjacent city: and without delay, fear, or resentment, they proceeded to declare their message in the synagogue. The Jews in this place proved to be of a more ingenuous, candid, liberal, and teachable disposition, than those of Thessalonica, and more deserving of the honourable distinction of Abraham's seed, in which the nation in general gloried greatly: for they applied their minds with all readiness and seriousness to the word which the apostle preached to them; and though they did not *implicitly* receive his doctrine, or submit to his arguments; yet they impartially and diligently investigated the subject. They not only heard him preach on the sabbath-days, or at other times, but they *daily* employed themselves in searching the Scriptures, and comparing its predictions with the facts attested to them. Thus many of them were led to a solid conviction of the truth; and with these Jews several religious proselytes, and some of the most affluent and honourable women of the city, embraced Christianity. But the envious Jews of Thessalonica, hearing of this success, followed Paul and Silas to Berea, and there excited a storm of popular fury against them. And as Paul was most obnoxious to them, it was judged necessary for him to recede from the danger: they therefore conducted him towards the sea-coast, that it might be supposed he was about to embark for Asia. But from thence he changed his course, and thus he arrived at Athens, one of the most famous cities of Greece, having left his companions behind him to regulate the affairs of the Church at Berea; and having sent word to them to come to him as soon as they could, he waited for them there. It does not appear whether Silas came to him while at Athens. Timothy, however, when he arrived, was sent from Athens back to Thessalonica, as we learn from the epistle; and both he and Silas again joined the apostle at Corinth. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 16, 17. It is probable that the apostle did not intend to open his ministry at Athens till Silas and Timothy joined him: perhaps he was not determined whether he should attempt to preach there, or pass over into Asia. Whilst he continued in this renowned city, the centre of polite learning, philosophy, and the fine arts, which was, as it were, the university of the Roman empire and of the world; he took little notice of their sculpture and edifices, the fragments of which to this day are considered as the most perfect models in their kind, or of their paintings and exhibitions. He is generally allowed to have been a man of fine taste and cultivated genius; but his thoughts were too much occupied about more sublime and interesting subjects, to make observations on these elegant or magnificent trifles: for his spirit was agitated, grieved, sharpened, and filled with indignation

and astonishment, to see a city, that was deemed so enlightened, entirely enslaved to the most stupid idolatry. It hath been asserted that there were more idols at Athens than in all the rest of Greece: the Athenians always imported the deities and superstitions of every nation along with their arts and learning; so that a satyrist ludicrously observed, 'It was easier to find a god than a man in that city.' This fact most completely demonstrates the insufficiency of science and philosophy to guide men in matters of religion. The barbarous Scythians, the wild Indians, nay, the stupid Hottentots, have never deviated further from truth, or sunk into grosser darkness, in respect of God and religion, than the ingenious and philosophical Athenians did. The apostle was thus excited to enter on his labours without delay: and first in the synagogue he proposed his doctrine to the Jews and proselytes, and earnestly endeavoured to convince them that Jesus was the Messiah; but as the whole seems to have been a *disputation*, we may conclude that he had not much success among them. He also disputed in the marketplace, or forum, with such of the philosophers, students, or others, as he could meet with; for there such persons used to converse and debate concerning their different opinions.

V. 18. In the forum the apostle was encountered by certain philosophers of different sects. The Epicureans were gay and superficial infidels, who amused themselves and others with various curious speculations. They ascribed the original of all things to chance: they pretended to allow the existence of the gods; yet they contended, that they did not interfere in the creation or government of the world, but indolently satisfied themselves with their own undisturbed felicity: they deemed the enjoyment of this present world the supreme good; and they denied a future state of rewards and punishments. The Stoicks allowed the existence of the gods, but supposed them to be bound by eternal and irresistible fatality; they pretended almost to extinguish their own feelings and passions; they were most extravagantly proud and obstinate; they judged a virtuous man, according to their notions of virtue, to be independent of, and in some sense superior to, their deities, and spoke as if he might defy fate itself: they deemed virtue to be its own reward, and expressed themselves very obscurely about a future state of retributions. These two sects of philosophers, being alike opposite in their tenets to the doctrines of the Gospel, and being full of the pride of superior learning, encountered Paul, and thought of silencing him in the argument: and some of them despised him as a babbler, or a man who had picked up a few scraps of learning in different places, of which he wanted to make a show; and as one who was fond of hearing himself speak, even among those who had

18. ii. 13. xiii.
41. xxv. 12.
xxvi. 8. 21. 25.
Gen. xix. 14. 25.
2. Cor. xix. 9-11. xxxvii. 16. Luke xlii. 63. xliii. 11. 35. 1. Cor. i. 23. iv. 10. Heb. xi. 36. xliii. 13.

32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead,^a some mocked; and

others said,^b We will hear thee again of this matter.

33 So Paul departed from among them.

of his curious auditors. He observed to them, that he perceived them to be exceedingly addicted to the worship of invisible beings. The word is ambiguous, and might be understood either as a commendation or a censure; and doubtless he chose it for that reason. They were indeed very religious in their way; but that was altogether superstitious and idolatrous. In surveying the city, and especially the temples, and the manner and objects of their worship, he had met with an altar inscribed "To the unknown God." It is attested by many writers that there was such an altar: and some think, that having imported the deities and worship of most other nations, they had erected this altar to the God of the Jews, who was always spoken of as invisible and incomprehensible, and whose name the Jews themselves scrupled to mention. Various other conjectures have been formed; but perhaps, after multiplying their deities to the utmost, some of them suspected that there was one God superior to all their idols, of whom they yet had no knowledge; and therefore they prevailed to have an altar dedicated to him also. Either way it suited the apostle's purpose to make this inscription the motto of his discourse; and he informed his learned audience, that he came to declare to them this "unknown God," of whom they confessed themselves ignorant, even whilst they professed to worship him. Indeed he was the great Creator of heaven and earth, (which neither existed from eternity, nor were produced by chance or necessity, as some of their philosophers had imagined, but were formed by the One, living, eternal, almighty God;) and as he was the Proprietor and Governor of heaven and earth, he could not be supposed to inhabit temples (as their idols did;) nor could he be served with the workmanship or oblations of men's hands, as if he wanted something to consummate his felicity: whereas, he was the universal Benefactor, and the source of being, life, breath, and all things, to all his creatures: and they were on that account required to worship, and acknowledge their obligations to him. He had indeed formed the whole race of men of one family, in that one man and woman from whom they were all descended; that they might dwell upon the face of the earth as brethren, without injuring each other: and neither blind chance, nor invincible necessity, but God, the sovereign Lord of all had, in his wisdom and justice, appointed the different ages of the world for the accomplishment of his predetermined counsels, and had allotted to every one the period in which he should live, and the bounds of his habitation. All this was intended to lead them to seek after him and his favour, and after the knowledge of his perfections, his works, his truth, and will, which was shown to them in the visible creation; if by any means, in their present state of error and ignorance, they might grope after him, as men in the dark, and find him; without which all other science would be of no real value. Yet the difficulty of knowing the true God did not arise from distance, or his unconcern about human affairs, as the Epicureans vainly supposed; but from other causes: for in fact he was not far from every one of them;

as in him all lived, moved, and existed, and must perish without his upholding power. This even some of their own poets had allowed, being in this matter far wiser than the philosophers: for one of them, (called Aretus,) had said, "We are also his offspring," and others had expressed nearly the same sentiment. If then men were the offspring of God, the absurdity of representing the Deity himself by gold, or silver, or stone, however exquisitely fashioned and carved, must be evident; as nothing of this kind could do more than form an imperfect resemblance of man's exterior, without at all representing the functions of animal life, or the operations of his mind. Indeed, God had long borne with men's apostasy, ignorance, and idolatry: he had acted, as if he would not look upon their provocation, in giving his glory to worthless idols: and whilst he continued his providential kindness, he sent no prophets to call them off from their idolatry to the worship of his name. But the times of this ignorance were expiring; and by his servants he now commanded all men every where to repent of their idolatry and all other sins, and not to pretend to excuse or vindicate their conduct. This was a bold demand upon the self-wise and self-admiring Stoics; and as opposite to their notions of virtue and of fatality, as to the Epicurean sentiments of chance and pleasure. The apostle further added, that though they should at present escape with impunity, yet God had appointed a day, when he would summon all the inhabitants of the earth to his tribunal, and judge them in perfect righteousness, rendering to every man according to his work. This he would do, by that extraordinary Person, the Man Christ Jesus, who was constituted the universal Lord and Judge of the whole human race. Of this, God had given the fullest assurance to all men, by raising him from the dead, which was proved by most unexceptionable testimony. Thus far the apostle was permitted to proceed in introducing his subject; for much more he certainly intended to have said, had not the levity and petulance of his audience constrained him to terminate his discourse. Contrast this address with the speculations of the Greek philosophers; with those of the Epicureans and the Stoics in particular. In this contrast, it appears dignified, rational, sublime. It asserts the Being and Unity of God; that he created the world, and all things in it: his universal providence; the intimate relation of men all over the world to each other: (though his hearers had been accustomed to call the rest of mankind barbarians;) the palpable folly of idolatry, and its criminality, with calls to repentance: and it sets before them a future judgment, and a life beyond the grave; all this in the compass of a few verses, in which not a word seems redundant, yet nothing is defective! Whoever reflects on the endless mazes in which these wise philosophers of Athens, and indeed all those of the ancient world, were wandering, on all these subjects, so awfully interesting; and compares the solid rationality of the sentiments here so simply proposed, with their vain, but ostentatious, wisdom, must be very much struck indeed. Then with regard to evidence,

e 4 xiii. 48. Is.
1. 10. 11. Matt
xx. 16. Rom. xii.
5 6

34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was

Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

d 19. John vii. 4
- 52. xix. 38-
42. Phil. iv. 22.

They had nothing to offer but abstruse and bewildering reasonings, which were perfectly incomprehensible by the mass of mankind, and which brought home no effectual conviction to the mind of any one. All was among *them* without certainty, and without authority. But the apostle was able to confirm his doctrine by arguments intelligible to all; the conclusiveness of which human nature *feels*, and cannot but feel. He would have appealed to miracles, (particularly the resurrection of Christ;) and to various other proofs; 'but his tired audience refused to hear him out.' The manner of the apostle likewise, in addressing these idolaters and philosophers, who were strangers to the ancient Scriptures, and his reasoning with them on such principles as they allowed or could not deny, should be compared with his addresses to the Jews, who professed to believe the Scriptures, and with whom he argued on the ground of this profession. Christianity might indeed be established by proofs, wholly independent of the Old Testament: yet it called men to believe nothing, as actually accomplished, but what had been predicted, typified, or promised. Of this the inspired preachers never failed to avail themselves, in addressing the Jews; both as a most conclusive proof that their doctrine was from God, in addition to all miracles and other internal and external evidences; and also as peculiarly interesting to those who possessed, and professed to reverence, the sacred oracles. But to have brought proofs from Scripture to idolatrous or philosophizing Gentiles, would have been highly irrational: and St. Paul's example, especially in this particular, cannot be too carefully studied and copied by all, who are called to address infidels, or idolaters, or persons totally ignorant and careless in the concerns of religion.

V. 32—34. It is probable, that the Epicureans led the ridicule, by deriding the resurrection of the dead as an impossibility: the rest of the company found the apostle's doctrine too serious and practical for their vain and curious minds; and therefore they declined hearing any more on such subjects till another time. He was indeed treated at Athens with more exterior civility than in some other places: but none despised or neglected his doctrine with more supercilious indifference than these speculating philosophers; and this proved the worst soil, in which he ever attempted to sow the good seed of the kingdom. Yet even here grace triumphed over the prejudices of one senator, and a woman of considerable note, with a few others; who believed the Gospel, and further attended on the apostles for instruction.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—9.



Most evidently doth it appear from this history, that the zealous servants of Christ must be despised and hated by all kinds of persons for his sake. Nothing, however, shall in any wise hurt them; and nothing should dismay them, or deter them from publishing the glad tidings of salvation to sinners. We ought to reason with our hear-

ers, and to prove our doctrines with conclusive arguments; and not merely to address their imaginations and affections: but our reasonings should be deduced from, or grounded on, the word of God; otherwise we shall lose ourselves in empty speculations, or go beyond our depth, by attempting discussions for which we are totally incompetent. But when we clearly open and explain the Scriptures, and support our conclusions by testimonies of holy writ; when we thus evidently lay before men those truths, that relate to the person, sufferings, resurrection, and kingdom of Jesus Christ; and then apply such subjects to their hearts and consciences by pathetic addresses: we use the proper means of bringing them to the obedience of faith, and may expect to see our labours blessed to many souls.

—But how strange is it, that men should grudge and envy others those privileges, of which they will not themselves accept! Or that zeal for religious creeds or systems should induce them "to take to themselves lewd fellows of the baser sort," to set cities in an uproar, to assault and destroy men's houses, and to lay wait for their lives! Such proceedings disgrace and betray the cause which they are brought to support; and the friends of truth and piety must mourn and lament, if ever any of their pretended associates take weapons of this kind from the enemies of God and his people, to use them to their annoyance. Mobs are always incompetent judges of liberty and privileges; and very singular it is to hear them and their leaders exclaim against others, as disturbers of the peace and order of the community. Indeed the Gospel is intended, in a certain sense, "to turn the world upside down;" for sin and Satan have inverted the right order of things; and when the kingdom of God is established in the hearts of men, an entire revolution takes place in their judgment, maxims, affections, conduct, and conversation. In this respect we should all desire and endeavour to turn the world upside down; and should pray that ministers may be sent to every part of the earth, whom the Lord will employ in this blessed work of effecting a revolution among men. But the kingdom of Christ is not of this world: and his most faithful servants will be the most peaceable subjects to that authority, which Providence places over them; they will be ready to obey the decrees of Cesar, unless he command them to break the laws of their other and more exalted King, even Jesus, the Prince of the kings of the earth; and then they will meekly endure persecution for conscience' sake. In general, they will leave it to the children of this world to contend about civil liberties and immunities; except when called on to perform a constitutional duty, as members of the community, or when required to act in a public station. So that neither rulers nor people need to be troubled at the increase of real Christians; though many turbulent spirits, making religion the pretext, will ambitiously join in faction and rebellion, and thus bring a disgrace upon the Gospel. Of such we should beware; from such we should withdraw, that we may give all reasonable security for our good behaviour in civil society, whilst we claim the undoubted right of worshipping God according to our consciences.

CHAP. XVIII.

• *Paul goes to Corinth, meets with Aquila and Priscilla, and works with them as a tent-maker; preaches, first to the Jews, 1—5, and when they opposed and blasphemed, to the Gentiles with more success, 6—8. Encouraged by a vision, he remains there a long time, 9—11. The Jews bring him*

before Gallio, the proconsul, who refuses to attend to such questions, 12—17. Paul returns by Ephesus to Jerusalem, goes from thence to Antioch, and revisits the Churches which he had planted, 18—23. Apollos preaches at Ephesus; and being more fully instructed by Aquila and Priscilla, he goes to Achaia, where he labours very successfully, 24—28.

V. 10—15.

True dignity and nobleness of spirit greatly consist in an enlarged and unprejudiced mind, open to conviction, willing to investigate the truth, to examine the evidence adduced in support of men's opinions, and to treat religious inquirers with candour, seriousness, and diligence. Such an ingenuous and teachable disposition comes from above: they who possess it will cautiously avoid a blind credulity, an obstinate bigotry, and a heedless concealed infidelity: they will receive the word of sober teachers with all readiness of mind; and feeling their need of divine instruction, they will daily search the Scriptures, to see whether things are so, or not; impartiality, humility, and industry, will combine in their researches; and the truth requires no more. Such men will gradually rectify their mistakes, obtain solutions of their difficulties, find answers to their objections, and be led into a solid understanding and firm belief of the Gospel. And when this noble disposition is found in those, who are also honourable in society, it forms a distinction peculiarly valuable and useful. But nothing can be more ignoble and base, than bigotry and persecution: and many, who appeared devout in their way, have been most inveterate against the truth, and most active in stirring up others to oppose it.

V. 16—21.

The spiritual mind, (how ingenious or cultivated soever it may be,) can take little delight in contemplating the most admired productions of science and genius; whilst it observes that the persons concerned about them are wholly enslaved to sin, or given up to impiety and infidelity. Not only do unlettered savages sit in darkness, and the region and shadow of death; but even those citizens, and persons, who are most renowned for civilization and science, are often enveloped with the deepest ignorance in the things of God and eternity. Nay, none are more childish in their superstitions, more impious in their speculations, or more credulous of absurd impostures, than some of the most eminent persons for genius and learning have been! Thus God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world: he hath taken the wise in their own craftiness; and hath made way for the display of his glory, in saving sinners "by the foolishness of preaching." The consideration of the state of the world, both wise and unwise, may well put an edge upon our spirits, whilst we avow our belief of, and contend for, the Sacred Scriptures, and the doctrines revealed in them. Yet, if in the meekness of wisdom, we should venture to start such topics as "Jesus

"and the resurrection," either in the busy resorts of commerce, in the courts of justice, in the schools of the philosophers, or even in polite company; numbers would frown, deride, or exclaim: whilst Epicureans, and Stoics, and speculators of jarring tenets, would unite in encountering us with their arguments, or showing their contempt of us, as vain babblers, or as innovators in religion. And should any seem to pay a more respectful and civil attention to our discourse, it would probably be only in order to gratify a vain curiosity, and to hear the new doctrine, as they would call it. For though the truths of the Gospel are in some respects as old as the fall of man, yet they are often strange things in the ears of the learned; and they, whose lives have been almost entirely spent in studying, hearing, or telling some new thing, are often totally unacquainted with "the good old way" to heaven; and talk about it in the most obscure and dubious manner. But modern speculators seldom show so much respect to the preachers of the Gospel, as the Athenians did to St. Paul: for they are aware that their doctrine will afford little gratification to their curiosity and vain-glory; and that inferences may be drawn from it, very inimical to their carnal pursuits, and sinful lives.

V. 22—29.

In addressing mankind about their souls, we should study their peculiar dispositions and opinions; and we should inquire what truths they admit, and what errors they are fallen into: thus we may be able to combat them from their own principles, and gradually point out the absurdity of their tenets, and the inconsistency of their conduct: and we may often graft the truth upon, or deduce it from such sentiments as they allow. Alas, how many are there to this day, who have their devotions and superstitions, and are vastly zealous for them: yet the great object of all worship is to them "An unknown God:" as they are not acquainted with the mysterious manner of his subsistence, the glory and harmony of his perfections, or the way in which he will be approached and served! If such men allow the truth of the Scriptures, we may reason with them from those sacred oracles: otherwise, we should lead them, from self-evident principles, or such as admit of the most obvious proof, to see their need of a revelation, to attend to the evidences of its divine original, and to the beneficial tendency of the things contained in it. Thus we may declare unto them that God, whom they ignorantly worship; and gradually lead them from the works of creation to the great Creator; and from his providential care and bounty to our obliga-

a xii. 23, 24.

b xix. i. 1 Cor. i.
2. 2 Cor. i. 1. 23.
3 Tim. iv. 20.c 26 Rom xvi. 3.
4. 1 Cor. xvi. 19.
2 Tim. i. 19.
d ii. 8. 1 Pet. i. 1.
e xi. 29.f xix. 34, 35. 1
Cor. iv. 12 ix.
6-12 2 Cor. xi.
9. 1 Thes. ii. 9.
2 Thes. ii. 8. 9.
g xiii. 14 xc. xiv.
4. xvi. 1-23. 11.
7. xix. 8. Luke
iv. 36.

AFTER these things, Paul ^a departed from Athens, and came to ^b Corinth; ^c And found a certain Jew, named Aquila, born in ^d Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, (because that ^e Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome,) and came unto them.

3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, ^f and wrought: (for by their occupation they were tent-makers.)

4 And ^g he reasoned in the synagogue

tions to love and worship him, and our criminality in ungratefully neglecting him. So from a view of his perfections and authority, as the great Proprietor and Lord of all, we may expose the vanity of superstition and idolatry; and of all mere outward forms, oblations, and services by which men have sought to recommend themselves to God; as if they could benefit him, "who giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." Thus we may infer, that the end of our creation, and of all the appointments of God towards us and our special advantages, is, to lead us to seek and serve him in spirit and truth, that we may find him, and true happiness in his favour. Hence we may show how men grope in the dark, and proceed amidst bewildering doubts and uncertainties in this most important matter, though the Lord is near unto us, and we live, move, and exist in him; and thus evince their need of his word and Spirit, to lead them into a spiritual acquaintance with him. From the rational nature of man, who is in this respect the offspring, and bears the image, of God, we may infer the absurdity of many established customs and sentiments, which degrade the infinite God unto, or almost beneath, the level of his creatures. Sometimes we may produce the testimony of poets, and prophets of their own, in confirmation of our sentiments: and if a man have acquired classical learning and general knowledge, he may thus make good use of them: yet it is scarcely advisable for those who are intended for the ministry to spend much time about those indecent fables and corrupt principles and practices, which must be reviewed in acquiring this kind of learning.

V. 30—31.

Notwithstanding all the renown of Athens, and of ancient Greece, God deemed those the times and places of *ignorance*: and though he connived at the dishonour there put upon him, yet he did not excuse the impiety and iniquity of the inhabitants. He commanded them, yea, he commands us and all men every where, to repent: nor will any proud pretensions to virtue, or any vain reasonings about necessity or contingency, or any philosophical or theological system, excuse men in neglecting this call. All need repentance and must perish without it; all, who repent and believe the Gospel will be saved; and this is every man's duty, though no one is disposed to perform it without the grace of God. But the sins committed in

every sabbath, and ^h persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

5 And, when ⁱ Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul ^k was pressed in spirit, ^l and testified to the Jews that Jesus ^m was Christ.

6 And when ⁿ they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, ^o he shook his raiment, and said unto them, ^p Your blood be upon your own heads, I am clean: ^q from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

7 And he came out, and said, ^r The will of the Lord be done. And he departed, leaving them without counsel.

the time of a man's ignorance will be far less severely punished, than those which are perpetrated in defiance and contempt of the light of the Gospel. In calling men to repentance, we should always direct their attention to that appointed day, when God will judge the world in righteousness; and to Jesus, and his authority, salvation, death, and resurrection: and whatever introduction we use, all our discourses must lead to and centre in him. — But even the most consummate wisdom and address, united with the purest zeal and simplicity in the teacher, will often leave the hearers under the deeper condemnation. Some reject the word with supercilious contempt and mockery; and others from indolence, levity, and procrastination. Of all subjects, that gains the least attention, which deserves the most: men profess an intention some time to hear it again; but this time never arrives to numbers, till at the great tribunal it be repeated, to seal their condemnation. Nor are any persons more likely to fall into this snare of Satan, than self-conceited scholars, and sneering skeptics and infidels. But if they scorn, they alone must bear it. The minister must be satisfied with faithfully delivering his message; nay, even if he be interrupted by the petulance of despisers, before he can conclude his subject. However, the word will never be absolutely useless: some Athenians, and some senators, as well as others, will cleave to the Lord and his faithful servants, and these may be useful to more in due time. So that we should go on with our work, in patience and hope, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII. V. 1—6. The apostle seems to have had so little prospect of success at Athens, that he left it as soon as he could. Timothy came thither to him, and from thence was sent to Thessalonica. (1 Thes. iii. 1, 2.) In the mean time Paul went to Corinth, and Achaia, within the Peninsula called Peloponnesus, a city remarkable for opulence, elegance, luxury, and licentiousness. Here he met with Aquila, a Jew, who was a native of Pontus in Asia, but had resided for some time at Rome, where he seems to have been converted to Christianity, with his wife Priscilla; but they had lately been expelled from that city, as Jews, by the edict of the Roman emperor, who was led to treat all of that nation as seditious and dangerous persons. Some think that the preaching of Jesus about this time at Rome, as the

q Col. iv. 11.
 2 x. 22 xii. 43
 xvi. 14. xvii. 4
 81 Cor. i. 14
 117 xiii. 15.
 Mark v. 25.
 u xx. 2. xvi. 14. 15.
 24. Gen. xvi. 27.
 27. xviii. 19.
 Josh. xiv. 15.
 xii. 37-41. viii.
 12 35-38. Matt.
 xxviii. 19. Mark
 xvi. 15, 16. Rom.
 x. 14-17. 1 Cor.
 i. 13-17.
 y xvi. x. xiii. 10.
 xxiii. 11. xxviii.
 20-29. 2 Cor.
 xii. 1, 7.
 z Is. lviii. 1. Jer.
 i. 1 Ex. ii. 6.
 11. 9-11.
 Jon. iii. 2. Mic.
 xii. 8. Eph. vi. 19.
 20. 1 Thes. iii. 2.

7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain *man's* house, named *Justus*, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

8 And *Crispus*, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord, with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized.

9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:

promised Messiah, and the king of Israel, gave occasion to this severity, but this is very uncertain. Paul, however, being acquainted with the character of these two excellent persons, went to lodge with them; and having in his youth learned their trade of making tents, which were much used in those warm climates, he wrought at it for his livelihood. It was an excellent custom in those days, for such persons as received a liberal education to be also instructed in some mechanical trade: this served them as an amusement in prosperity, and was a certain resource in case all other prospects failed. Whatever assistance Paul received from the churches at Antioch, or Philippi, or other cities, he was often reduced to great necessity by the expenses of his journeys: and we learn from many intimations in his writings, that he frequently wrought with his own hands for his subsistence, lest he should be chargeable to his converts. On the sabbath-days, however, he, as usual, reasoned with the Jews at Corinth in the synagogue, concerning the kingdom and salvation of Christ; and endeavoured to persuade both them and the Gentiles who joined in their worship, to believe in Jesus as the promised Messiah. But when Silas, (who perhaps had staid some time at Berea,) and Timothy, were come to him to confirm his testimony, he was inwardly excited by the Holy Spirit to still greater vehemency of mind, in bearing testimony to his Lord: and when the Jews opposed his doctrine, and even blasphemed the name of Jesus, "he shook his raiment," as renouncing all fellowship with them; and to add emphasis to his warnings, whilst he declared that they were likely to perish in their sins by their own default, as murderers of their own souls; but that he, having faithfully delivered his message, was pure from the guilt of their ruin, and would therefore go and preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. *Pressed in spirit.* (5.) Either his own, or the Holy Spirit, so powerfully urged and constrained him, that he could not refrain from speaking. (*Whitby.*) It is not supposable, that the apostle was excited or constrained, by a vehemence of natural temper, to act improperly on this occasion: and if the ardour of his own spirit was holy, no doubt it was excited by the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, how can it be supposed that the Holy Spirit urged and constrained him, except by exciting and invigorating holy affections in his heart?

V. 7, 8. The apostle, it is probable, continued to lodge and work with Aquila and Priscilla; though he no more

10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment-seat,

13 Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

i. 1 ix. 2. xi. 10. 1 Thes. i. 7, 8. — xiii. 50. xiv. 2. 19. xvii. 5. 13. xxi. 27, &c. — 14 vi. 13. xxi. 23. xxiv. 5, 6. xlv. 8.

a Ex. iv. 12. Josh. i. 5. 9. Jude. 11.
 16. Is. vi. 10.
 Jer. i. 10. 2.
 Matt. 23.
 xxviii. 20. 20.
 xii. 9. 2 Tim. iv. 17. 22.
 b Is. lii. 17. Jer. xv. 20, 21. Matt. x. 30. Luc. x. 30.
 c 1 Cor. vi. 11. 13. cxv. 14. 18. John x. 16. xi. 52.
 Rom. x. 50, 21.
 1 Cor. vi. 9-11.
 d xiv. 3. xix. 10. xx. 31.
 e Or. and there.
 f xlii. 7. 12.
 g 127. Rom. x. 26.
 h xvi. 5. 2 Cor. x. 15. 16. 2 Cor. vi. 9-11.

preached in the synagogue, but used the house of a Gentile, who had renounced idolatry before his conversion to Christianity, and perhaps had been circumcised. This circumstance, as well as the nearness of the house to the synagogue, might tend to give the Jews, who desired it, an opportunity of still attending his preaching. Indeed, several of them had already embraced the Gospel; especially the chief ruler of the synagogue, with all his family: and many afterwards were converted, both of the Jews and Gentiles.

V. 9-11. The apostle at this time seems to have been greatly discouraged in his ministry, either by the virulent enmity of the Jews, or the dissolute character of the Gentiles; and by a consciousness of his own insufficiency and manifold infirmities; (1 Cor. ii. 3.) The Lord Jesus therefore condescended to appear to him in vision, to obviate his fear, to embolden him in his work, to assure him of his protecting presence, and to inform him that he had much people in that city. In this he evidently spake of those who were his by election, the gift of the Father, and his own purchase, though at that time in an unconverted state, (*Notes, John x. 16. xi. 51, 52.*) and what sort of persons they then were, the apostle hath in another place informed us. (1 Cor. vi. 9-11.) Thus encouraged, he fixed his abode at Corinth for a year and a half, during which time he planted a very numerous and flourishing Church. *People, &c.* (10.) So they are called, who are still heathens, not because of any absolute decree of their election to eternal life, but because Christ saw that they were disposed to believe. (*Whitby.*) Thus, in opposing the doctrine of election, the original depravity and carnal enmity of the human heart, and the necessity of regeneration, are virtually denied, or at best, totally lost sight of. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he loved us even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; by grace are ye saved." Were such persons as the idolatrous licentious Corinthians disposed of themselves, independent of divine grace preventing them, to embrace the humbling pure Gospel of Christ; and to change their jovial and sensual rites for the spiritual worship of the heart-searching holy God? Does this doctrine accord with the ninth and tenth articles of our Church? And would it not have been called *Pelagian*, before the term *Arminian* was known?

14 And ^k when Paul was now about to open ^{his} mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, ^l If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should ^m bear with you :

15 But if it be ⁿ a question of words, and names, and of your law, ^o look ye to it ; ^p for I will be no judge of such matters.

16 And ^q he drave them from the judgment-seat.

17 Then all the Greeks took ^r Sosthenes ^s the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat ^{him} before the judgment-seat : and Gallio cared for none of those things.

18 ¶ And Paul, after this, tarried ^t there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into ^u Syria, and with him ^x Priscilla and

Aquila, ^y having shorn ^{his} head in ^z Cenchrea ; for he had a vow.

19 And he came to ^a Ephesus, and left them there : ^b but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

20 When they desired ^{him} to tarry longer time with them, ^c he consented not ;

21 But ^d bade them farewell, saying, ^e I must by all means keep this feast that cometh, in Jerusalem : but I will return again unto you, ^f if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

22 And when he had landed at ^g Cæsarea, and ^h gone up and saluted ⁱ the church, ^k he went down to Antioch.

23 And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over ^l all the

V. 12—17. ‘Dr. Lardner justly observes, that this is another instance of the exact propriety, with which St. Luke expresses himself. For though the province of Achaia, which comprehended all the rest of Greece, had a more various fortune than that of Cyprus, and frequently changed its form of government ; yet, A. D. 44, (which is generally supposed to have been about eight years before this event,) it was restored to the senate, and so became proconsular.’ (Doddridge.) Gallio is supposed to have been brother to Seneca, the renowned Pagan moralist, and he bears a fair character in history. As the Jews were allowed the free exercise of their religion at Corinth, they supposed that he would have exerted his authority against those who innovated on their ancient customs : they therefore tumultuously seized on Paul, and dragged him to the Roman tribunal, and with much contempt accused him of inducing men to worship God, in a manner contrary to their law. But when the apostle was about to plead his own cause, and to embrace the opportunity of declaring the Gospel before Gallio, that magistrate refused to take any cognizance of such matters. He declared, that if any person had been defrauded or oppressed, or any mischievous licentiousness had been committed, it would have been reasonable for him to attend to them, notwithstanding the irregularity and clamour of their proceedings : but as their dispute related only to their religious peculiarities, the names of Jesus and the Messiah, or the obligations of the Mosaic law on all that worshipped the God of the Jews, they should decide it for themselves, for he would not trouble himself about such subjects. With this answer he dismissed them, and ordered them away from the judgment-seat, with apparent sternness ; and when the Greeks abused and beat Sosthenes, even in his sight, he took no cognizance of this breach of the peace, for he “cared for none of those things.” It is not agreed who Sosthenes was : some think that he was the same person as Crispus, before-mentioned ; (9 :) others, that he succeeded him as chief ruler of the synagogue, when he embraced Chris-

tianity : some think that he was the leading person in the prosecution of Paul, and that he was abused by those Greeks who favoured the apostle : others conjecture that he was a Christian, and that the Jews excited the Greeks to abuse him, when they could not prevail to wreak their malice on Paul. We afterwards read of Sosthenes among the apostle’s chief friends, (1 Cor. i. 1 :) if this was the same person, as is probable from the manner in which Luke mentions him, the latter opinion is favoured by it, for the conversion of a leading persecutor would scarcely have been passed over in silence. The Alexandrian manuscripts and some ancient versions read *Jews*, instead of *Greeks*, and it has been conjectured that *ταυτας*, (all, or they all,) was the original reading : and that some transcribers took the liberty of inserting *Greeks*, and others, *Jews*, in the copies which they wrote. This indeed would remove the difficulty, and clearly show that Sosthenes was a Christian. But the authority for the alteration is scarcely sufficient to proceed upon. (See Paley’s *Horæ Paulinæ*.) Gallio’s conduct in this transaction hath been considered in very different lights : some having severely condemned it, and others having highly approved it. Doubtless he acted properly, in refusing, as a magistrate, to give any assistance to persecutors, or to interfere with the determination of religious controversies : but there seems to have been a contemptuous disregard of all such topics, as beneath his notice : he probably deemed both Jews and Christians to be ignorant and deluded fanatics ; and that it was of no consequence who was right or wrong in disputes of such a nature. A mixture of philosophical skepticism, and of political contempt of religious matters compared with affairs of state, seems to have influenced his conduct. As he would not use his authority against Paul ; so he would not protect Sosthenes, or punish the injury done to him : and the historian evidently blames him, because “he cared for none of those things.” This profane man thought this a controversy rather of words than of things ; and considered the doctrine of God as vain words.’ (Beza.)

country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

21 ¶ And a certain Jew, named ^a Apollos, born at ^c Alexandria, ^b an eloquent man, and ^d mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus.

25 This man was ^e instructed in the way of the Lord: and being ^f fervent in the Spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, ^g knowing only the baptism of John.

26 And he began ^h to speak boldly in

the synagogue: whom, when ⁱ Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and ^j expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, ^k the brethren wrote, ^l exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, ^m helped them much which had ⁿ believed through grace:

28 For he mightily ^o convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus ^p was Christ.

29 Phil. i. 23. Col. ii. 12. 2 Thes. ii. 13, 14. Tit. iii. 4-6. Jam. i. 16-18. Pet. i. 2, 3. 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. Heb. vii. 1-3.

V. 18—23. Notwithstanding the tumultuous enmity of the Jews, the Lord Jesus continued to protect his servant, whilst he abode still longer at Corinth. At length he took a pious and affectionate farewell of the new converts, and set sail for Syria; being accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla, who intended to settle for a time at Ephesus. But before he embarked, he cut off his hair at Cenchrea, the port of Corinth, on account of a vow which he had taken, respecting some of his multiplied deliverances. Probably this was of the nature of the Nazarite's vow: but when the distance prevented a person from going to Jerusalem, at the expiration of the term, cutting off his hair in another place than at the sanctuary, seems to have been customarily dispensed with. Perhaps some casual defilement made it necessary for the apostle to cut off his hair, and begin again the appointed term: and being at so great a distance, it might be judged allowable to do this at Cenchrea; and to offer the required sacrifices when he came to the temple. It is not indeed recorded, that he did offer them; but this does not prove the contrary. Some indeed suppose that Aquila is meant; but without much reason, as it appears to me. (*Notes, Num. vi.*) When the apostle came to Ephesus, where he left his friends Aquila and Priscilla, he took the opportunity of setting before the Jews in that city, the substance and evidences of his doctrine: yet he would not be prevailed upon to stay longer with them: as he purposed, for reasons which are not here specified, to be at Jerusalem at the ensuing passover: but he promised to return to them, if the Lord would permit him. The voyage and circuit here mentioned must have taken up a long time; yet they are related in very few words; which shows that the design of the narrative is not so much to gratify our curiosity, as to give us an instructive specimen of the manner in which Christianity was at first propagated. The travels, labours, and success of the apostle also were vastly greater than a superficial reader would suppose; for the events of years, and the conversion of thousands, are sometimes recorded in a few verses. Having landed at Cesarea, the apostle went up to Jerusalem; and having shown his affection and respect to the Christians there, and finished the business which he had in view, he travelled from thence to Antioch in Syria. And after a while he set out a third time from that city, to preach the Gospel in Asia Minor;

and so he passed again through the several cities and regions, where Churches had before been planted, encouraging and animating the disciples, regulating the affairs of the Churches, and doubtless making numerous converts.

V. 24—28. Whilst Paul was thus employed, Apollos, a native of Alexandria in Egypt, a person of a ready and graceful elocution, and of great acquaintance with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, arrived at Ephesus. He had got some knowledge of the way of salvation by faith in the Messiah, as far as it could be learned from John's ministry, baptism, and testimony to Jesus, whom he pointed out as "the Lamb of God," "the Son of God," the "Bridegroom of the Church," and the promised Messiah. It does not, however, appear that he had ever been among the Christians; nor is it known when and by whom he received Christian baptism: and there is no proof that he had at this time any miraculous powers. But being very zealous for the honour of God and the interests of true religion, he went from place to place, diligently teaching the Jews what he knew of the necessity of repentance, and fruits meet for repentance, as a preparation for the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom. Of these subjects he boldly preached in the synagogue at Ephesus, in the hearing of Aquila and Priscilla: and perceiving his ability, zeal, and piety, they said nothing to his disadvantage, though they found that he had very imperfect views of those subjects on which he spoke. On the contrary, they formed an acquaintance with him, and so showed him more completely the doctrine of the Gospel, and the things which had taken place in respect of Jesus Christ: and he, with the most amiable humility, received their instructions, and so obtained more adequate qualifications for his important work. At length, he determined to go into Achaia and to Corinth; and by their recommendatory letters he was introduced to the Christians there; and proved very useful to them, and successful in convincing the Jews, in the most public manner, that Jesus was indeed their promised Messiah. *Believed through grace.* (27.) 'That is, through the Gospel, says Dr. Hammond, 'or through the favour of God in vouchsafing them the 'knowledge of it.' (*Whitby.*) (*Note. 9. 11.*) 'The 'best comment on these words is what we are told elsewhere. "Paul planted, Apollos watered; but God gave 'the increase." (*Doddridge.*)

CHAP. XIX.

Paul, arriving at Ephesus, finds disciples who only knew John's baptism; and having instructed them, and baptized them in the name of Christ, he confers on them the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, 1—7. He preaches, first in the synagogue; and then very successfully in a school for two years, God confirming his word by miracles, 8—12. Certain Jewish exorcists, attempting to cast out a devil in the name of Jesus, are sent

away naked and wounded, 13—17. Many, who had used magical arts, are converted, and burn their books, 18—20. Paul, purposing to go into Macedonia, and then to Jerusalem and to Rome, sends helpers before him, 21, 22. Demetrius with the silversmiths raise a mob against him, to support their gainful traffic and the worship of Diana, which is attended with great uproar and confusion, 23—34. The town-clerk, with great difficulty and address, appeases it, 35—41.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—8.

Whilst the zealous ministers of Christ carefully shun whatever may entangle them in the affairs of this life, they will submit to any hardship or labour, that may subvert their usefulness, or prevent obstacles from being thrown in their way; and to work at a trade for daily bread, in order to preach the Gospel without charge, differs exceedingly from carrying on lucrative business, in order to grow rich and to live in abundance. The knowledge of any thing, by which an honest living can be earned, is a very valuable acquisition; it never can be injurious to a man, it cannot be taken from him, and it may on one occasion or other be peculiarly useful to him. Even among affluent persons, the ministers of Christ are more likely to do good, by showing an entire indifference to all that wealth can purchase, than by affecting a style of living, which emulates that of the very persons from whose liberality it requires support.—The love of Christ is the best bond of friendship, and the reciprocal communion of the saints sweetens labour, contempt, and even persecution. Cogent arguments and affectionate persuasions should concur in our endeavours to lead sinners to faith in the Saviour: but when great neglect is manifested, we should be pressed in spirit to testify to the truth with greater vehemence, even though it may excite more virulent opposition: and we must warn those who contradict and blaspheme, that they will perish, and their blood will be upon their own head, if they reject that faithful testimony, by which we keep ourselves pure from the guilt of their destruction. When some oppose the Gospel, we must turn to others; and our regret, that so many persist in their unbelief, should not prevent our gratitude for the conversion of some to the faith of the divine Saviour.

V. 9—23.

The most eminent, useful, and courageous ministers experience seasons of dejection and anxiety; both through consciousness of their own unworthiness and defects, the prospect of perils and difficulties in their work, and the determined enmity and opposition of many among whom they labour. But the Lord Jesus knows and will obviate

all their fears; he will encourage them to speak, and not hold their peace; and he will teach them to trust in his protection amidst all dangers, whilst he gathers in his chosen flock from those places, in which they are scattered before their conversion. Even the irreligion and infidelity of rulers, though exceedingly criminal in itself, hath often been over-ruled, for the protection of the disciples of Christ. Whatever be their motives, such magistrates as take care to prevent, or impartially to punish, those crimes that are injurious to the welfare of the community, and who refuse to use their authority in persecuting one religious sect at the instance of another, or in imposing doctrines, forms, and modes of worship, on men's consciences, certainly best understand and perform the duties of their office. Yet indifference to all matters of religion, and to the interests of eternity, is no necessary concomitant of toleration, but rather a disgrace to it; as it shows that rulers of this description are actuated merely by indolence and worldly policy, and not by a regard to the rights of conscience, or by a sense of their duty to God: and their toleration or protection of his worshippers will often be partial and contemptuous, and attended by improper connivance at those who violate the peace of society. We should, however, be thankful for security thus continued to us in Providence; and we must not forget to pray for those, who seem more to regard the liberties of mankind, than the salvation of their own souls. We ought simply to promote, in our several places, the cause of Christ; forming such plans as seem to us most proper for that end, and relying on the Lord to enable us to accomplish them, if he see good. But, alas, how immensely short do we come in active zeal, diligence, and patience, to the indefatigable apostle of the Gentiles! And with what earnestness and alacrity did he proceed from city to city, and nation to nation, to strengthen the disciples, and make known the salvation of Christ!

V. 24—28.

When natural talents for argument and elocution unite with great diligence in studying the Scriptures, and when they are attended with fervent zeal, piety, and humility, they qualify a man for doing much good, by "teaching diligently the things of the Lord." And even if persons thus qualified and disposed are yet in many things mistaken

Gen. iv. 12, 14.
Ps. cix. 10.
Matt. xii. 27.
Luke xii. 19.
1 Cor. i. 19.
Mark ix. 38.
Luke ix. 49.
c Josh. vi. 26. 1
Sam. xiv. 24. 1
Kings xxii. 16
Matt. xxvi. 63.
Mark v. 7.

13 Then certain of the ^a vagabond Jews, ^a exorcists, ^b took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We ^c adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth.

14 And there were seven sons of *one* Seva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.

15 And ^d the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

16 And ^e the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

17 And this was known to ^f all the Jews and Greeks also, dwelling at Ephesus; ^g and fear fell on them all, ^h and

the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

18 And many that believed came, and ⁱ confessed, and shewed their deeds.

19 Many of them also which ^k used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand *pieces* of silver.

20 So ^m mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed!

21 ¶ After ⁿ these things were ended, Paul ^o purposed in the spirit, ^p when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, ^q to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, ^r I must also see Rome.

22 So he sent into ^s Macedonia two of them ^t that ministered unto him, Timo-

d Lev. 17, 19. Gen. iii. 1-5. 1 Kings xxii. 21-23.
Matt. viii. 29-31. Mark i. 24.
34. v. 9-12.
Luke iv. 33-35.
vii. 28-32.
e Mark v. 3, 4.
15. Luke viii. 29, 31.
f 10
g 10. Lev. x. 3. 1 Sam. vi. 20. 2
h Phil. i. 20. 11.
9-11. 2 Thes. 12. iii. 1 Heb. ii. 3, 9. Rev. v. 12
-14

1. I. v. xvi. 25.
Kxxv. qic. 25.
Kxxvii. 27, 28.
Ps. xxxiii. 5.
Prov. xxxviii. 13.
Jer. iii. 12. 17.
xvi. 63. Kxxvi. 31.
Matt. iii. 1.
1. Kxxvii. 2-11. xiii. 6, 8. Ex. vii. 11.
22. Deut. xxviii. 12. 1 Sam. xxi. 7-9. 1 Chr. xxi. 6.
Is. viii. 19. Kxxv. 12, 13. Dan. ii. 2.
1 Cor. xxi. 4.
Ex. Kxxvi. 20.
Deut. vii. 25, 26.
1 Thes. ii. 21.
22. Matt. v. 29.
33. Luke xiv. 33. Heb. x. 34.
m vi. 7. xii. 24. 15.
lv. 11. 2 Thes. iii. 1.
n Rom. xv. 25-28.
o Kxxvi. 6-10. xlvii. 21. xx. 22. Lam. i. 30. Rom. xv. 13. 2 Cor. i. 13-12.
p xxiii. 1-6.
q Kxxvi. 12. xxi. 4.
r 11-15. 17. Kxxv. 17, 18. Rom. xv. 13-14.
s Kxxiii. 11. Kxxv. 14.
t 12-11. — Kxxv. 9.
u Kxxi. 5. Kxxi. 4.

tinued at Ephesus some months longer, before he went into Macedonia.

V. 13-20. (*Note, Num. xxii. 5.*) It was common in those days for persons to exorcise such as were possessed with evil spirits, especially among the Jews, and whatever methods they employed, they seem to have in some measure expressed a dependence on God, and at some times at least to have succeeded. (*Note, Matt. xii. 27.*) The persons here mentioned made a trade of such exorcisms, and strolled from place to place to carry it on. When they were at Ephesus, the superior efficacy of the name of Jesus in the mouth of Paul, above all their adjurations, determined them to adopt his manner, in hopes of increasing their gain; and so, without regard to the authority, salvation, or honour of Jesus, they attempted to cast out evil spirits, by adjuring them in his name to depart; and seven sons of one man, a chief-priest, combined together in such an attempt. But the evil spirit, by the mouth of the demoniac, answered, that he knew Jesus, and he knew Paul; but who were they? The words are ambiguous, and might imply a confederacy with Jesus and Paul; in consequence of which the evil spirit would have gone out, had Paul desired him in the name of Jesus; and Satan might intend to bring the Gospel into suspicion by the insinuation. (*Notes, Matt. xii. 22-30.*) Yet they may signify that the evil spirit knew the power and authority of Jesus, and the efficacy of the apostle's faith to engage that power by his word, so that if Paul had commanded, he must have yielded. But he knew them not, and would not obey their command. On the contrary, the possessed man, instigated by the evil spirit, assaulted the exorcists with supernatural force and fury, overcame them all, tore off their clothes, and drove them out of the house naked and wounded. A man must himself be possessed with a spirit of infidelity, that can doubt of this being a real possession, and maintain that it was the effect of insanity. This extraordinary transaction was soon known all over Ephesus, both to Jews and Gentiles;

and men became afraid to vilify or abuse the name of Jesus, which was in consequence had in honour, whatever the evil spirit meant by this resistance. Many, who had embraced the Gospel before, or who were then led to believe it, came and confessed the sins which they had committed, especially in practising magic and sorcery, and showed the arts which they had employed. Many also, of those who had been more eminent for these impious and wicked arts, brought the books which treated on such subjects, and which were highly esteemed at Ephesus, and, being determined no more to use them, or to make any gain of them, or to throw temptation in the way of others, but rather desirous of expressing their abhorrence of such practices, they publicly burned them. The sum at which they were valued, upon the lowest computation, amounted to above fifteen hundred pounds; some reckon it to have been almost seven thousand, the one supposing drachmas to be meant, the other shekels, of four times the value. This was a mighty triumph of the Gospel over men's prejudices, favourite pursuits, and love of money, when they were thus at once induced to commit to the flames, books which might have been sold for so large a sum, lest they should do further mischief to mankind. I think it evident that these books did not merely contain an account of the tricks, by which jugglers of any description imposed on men's senses, for in that case the persons concerned might have used the books to detect the artifices of such impostors; but they doubtless contained the rules and forms of those abominable incantations, by which an intercourse with evil spirits has continually been attempted or conducted, and which, being Satan's ordinances, the devised means of worshipping him, and of seeking help and information from him, ought by all means to be destroyed and forgotten, if possible. Though the attempt to revive and publish books on such subjects forms one of the bad effects, which attend on the manifold advantages of the liberty of the press, in this Christian nation and age.

theus and ^o Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

23 And the same time ^o there arose no small stir about ^o that way.

24 For, a certain man, named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for ^o Diana, ^o brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;

25 Whom he called together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ^o ye know that by this craft we have our wealth:

26 Moreover ye see and hear, ^o that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying, ^o That they be no gods which are ^o made with hands:

27 So ^o that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that

the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, ^o whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

28 And when they heard these sayings, ^o they were full of wrath, ^o and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

29 And ^o the whole city was filled with confusion: and, having caught ^o Gaius and ^o Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into ^o the theatre.

30 And when ^o Paul would have entered in unto the people, ^o the disciples suffered him not.

31 And certain of ^o the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.

V. 21, 22. After these long continued labours at Ephesus, the apostle purposed to go into Macedonia; either under the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit, or in the zeal and fervency of his own spiritual mind; but as he did not exactly accomplish his plan, according to the manner which he intended, perhaps the latter meaning may be preferable. He designed to sail westward into Macedonia, and, having visited the Churches there and in Achaia, to go south-east as far as Jerusalem; and afterwards to return to the north-west, further than he had ever before been, that he might preach the Gospel at Rome. Thus he had laid the plan of voyages and journeys, backward and forward, to the extent of several thousands of miles, as if it had been no more than a progress through a single province! One part of his design was to collect money in the different Churches which he had planted, and to carry it to Jerusalem for the relief of the poor Christians there. For this purpose he sent before him Timothy, and Erastus, who had been the chamberlain of Corinth, to prepare the minds of the Thessalonians, Philippians, Bereans, and Corinthians, but he staid some time longer at Ephesus, before he went thither. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 23—31. In this interim a terrible disturbance was excited about "that way." (*Marg. Ref.*) Demetrius, a principal silversmith, carried on a large trade for silver models of the renowned temple of Diana at Ephesus, with a little image in each of them, which were in great request, both as curious and beautiful ornaments, and for superstitious purposes; and in this manufacture he employed a great number of workmen, much to their advantage as well as his own. Having therefore convened them, and all others whose occupations were connected with the support of the fashionable idolatry, he reminded them, that they got their wealth by making these silver shrines or temples, and such like articles of commerce; and he then showed them, that Paul's preaching was likely to ruin

their trade, by persuading the Ephesians and all the Asiatics, "that they were no gods, which were made with hands;" (a most heretical tenet, in the judgment of those who grew rich by manufacturing deities!) So that not only were they likely to be impoverished, and the workmen to starve for want of employment, but also their very religion was at stake, (about which, in subserviency to his lucre, he would be thought very zealous,) and the splendid temple and magnificent apparatus, with which the great goddess Diana was worshipped by persons from all parts of the world, were likely to sink into contempt and neglect, to the great injury of their renowned city. This address to the interest, superstition, pride, and resentment of the company, was calculated to inflame their passions. Accordingly, in most furious indignation against Paul and the Christians, and with immense zeal for their lucrative idolatry, they began to exclaim, as with one voice, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" This soon brought a mob together, and threw the whole city into an uproar; and as Paul was not met with, the ringleaders of the riot seized upon two of his companions in his travels, (*Marg. Ref.*) and rushed with them into the theatre, where the public games are supposed to have been then celebrating, probably intending to throw them to the wild beasts, with which slaves and condemned malefactors used to fight, for the cruel diversion of the spectators. When the apostle understood this, he was desirous of entering into the theatre, to speak to the people, being willing to venture himself, in hopes of preserving his friends; but the disciples, knowing that the enraged mob would not scruple to tear him in pieces, interposed to hinder him; indeed, some of the Asiarchs, or officers appointed from the different cities of Asia to superintend the public games, being friendly to him, sent to entreat that he would not thus expose himself, as they could not ensure him any protection. *No gods, &c.* (26.) "This plainly shows that the contrary opinion generally prevailed, namely, that there was a

† 29. xxi. 34.

40. Matt. xi. 7—
9 Luke. vi. 24
—26.

11 Tim. i. 20
2 Tim. iv. 14

xvii 17 xxi 16.
xvii. 40 xxi.
10 Luke 122.
xxviii. 1 xxvi. 1.
2 Phil. i. 7

2 Ths. xvi. 20.
Rom. ii. 22
21 Luke. xxi.
26 Matt. vi. 7.
a 28 Rev. xii. 4

* Gr the temple-
keeper
b 26 2 Thes. ii.
10 11 1 Tim
iv. 2.
c xiv 12, 13.

32 Some therefore * cried one thing, and some another; for the assembly was confused, * and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

33 And they drew † Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander † beckoned with the hand, and would have made * his defence unto the people;

34 But when † they knew that he was a Jew, † all with one voice, about the space of two hours, cried out, † Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

35 And when the town-clerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not, how that the city of the Ephesians is, a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, † and of the image which fell down from † Jupiter?

‘kind of divinity in the images of their supposed deities, though some of them had learned to speak of them just as the papists now do, who indeed may seem to have borrowed some of their apologies from the heathens.’ (Doddridge.) The vulgar, both among pagans and papists, always have supposed that there is some kind of divinity in the image, but the more learned and philosophical palliate the absurdity, by considering the image as the visible representation of the invisible deity, or saint. It might also be easily shown, that the processions, and other observances of the papists, are copied from pagan customs, and far more clear illustrations of these pompous ceremonies may be made from Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Juvenal, &c. than from the holy Scriptures, or even the apocrypha.

V. 32—41. As Paul did not appear among the people, and the ringleaders of the tumult could not make them generally acquainted with their intentions, some cried one thing, and some another; and, as is usual on such occasions, the greater number of them knew not the cause for which the tumult had been excited. At length one Alexander was singled out from the multitude, who made signs with his hand, that he wanted to speak in his own behalf before them. Many think that this was Alexander the coppersmith, who afterwards became an apostate from Christianity; but this is uncertain. It is not agreed whether he was a convert to Christianity, or an unbelieving Jew; some think that he wished to declaim against the Gospel, and thus to avert the odium from the Jews, and that the Jews put him forward for this purpose, thus joining with the idolaters, though it tended to undermine their own cause; others conclude, that, being seized on, he meant to plead for Christianity and against idolatry, and that the Jews were desirous of his being heard, from an apprehension that this tumult was excited against them, as well as against the Christians. The multitude, however,

36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, † ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

37 For ye have brought hither these men, † which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.

38 Wherefore if † Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, † have a matter against any man, † the law is open, and there are deputies; let them implead one another.

39 But, if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a † lawful assembly:

40 For † we are in danger to be called in question for this day's † uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.

41 And † when he had thus spoken, † he dismissed the assembly.

would not hear him, because they knew him to be a Jew, and an enemy to idolatry; but, in contempt of all the worshippers of God, and in order to magnify their idol, they with one consent most vociferously cried out for two hours together, “Great is the Ephesian Diana.” Having spent their rage, and wearied themselves in this ridiculous manner, they were thus kept from greater outrages; at length the Town-clerk, or Scribe, some magistrate of great authority, was enabled to appease the tumult, after which he spoke to the people with great address and ingenuity. He seemed to allow the truth and importance of their absurd traditions and idolatries, though it may be doubted whether he really believed any of them. He observed, that it was universally allowed, that their city deemed it her chief honour to support the temple and worship of Diana, and of her image, which immemorial tradition declared to have fallen down from Jupiter. As these things were undeniable, they ought to behave more quietly and cautiously. They had indeed apprehended two men, and were about to wreak their vengeance upon them, yet they had neither sacrilegiously robbed the temple of Diana, nor those of any other of their deities, nor had they uttered any blasphemies against their goddess. The apostle was not present, yet doubtless he too was meant; but while his doctrine undermined the foundations of idolatry, we may suppose that he never went out of his way to rail at any particular idol. The town-clerk or scribe, proceeded to show, that if any persons were injured in their property or business, they might bring the matter before the proconsuls in a regular course of law, and thus obtain satisfaction. (It appears from history, that the office of proconsul of Asia was at that time divided between two persons, called procurators, but who might not improperly be called proconsuls.) But if the complaint related to matters of religion, or other public interests, it ought to be decided in a regular meeting of the people, and not

d. v. 35—39 Prov.

xiv. 29 xxv. 8.

e xxv. 8. 1 Cor. v. 32 2 Cor. v. 3.

f 24.

g xviii. 14 Dem. xvii. 8. 1 Cor. vi. 1.

† Or, the court days are kept.

† Or, ordinary

h xvii. 5—8

i xx. 1. xxi. 31. 38. 1 Kings i. 41. Matt. xxvi. 31.

k Prov. xv. 1. 2.

l Eccl. ix. 17

m Ps. lxxv. 7 2 Cor. i. 10

CHAP. XX.

Paul and his friends go into Macedonia and Greece, and return to Troas, 1—6; where, as Paul preaches long, Eutychus falls from a window, and is taken up dead; but while the apostles and the disciples break bread, and converse till day-break, he is restored to them alive, 7—12. Paul and his friends sail to Miletus, 13

before the populace. So that, in fact, the law had been violated that day by these riotous proceedings, and the city and magistrates were liable to be called into question by the Romans for it, as they could assign no sufficient cause for the insurrection. By this politic harangue, the multitude were prevailed with to disperse, and Paul and his friends were preserved from the most imminent danger.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—12.

We do not at present expect miraculous powers; yet all, who profess themselves to be the disciples of Christ, should be called upon to examine whether they have received the seal of the Holy Spirit, in his sanctifying influences, to the sincerity of their faith. Alas, many such seem not to have heard that there is a Holy Ghost! And many regard all that is spoken concerning his graces and consolations to be enthusiasm and delusion: But it may properly be inquired of them, "Unto what then were ye baptized?" For they evidently know not the meaning of that external sign, on which they place so great a dependence! Where, however, men are conscientious and teachable, they will receive increasing light. Repentance and its genuine fruits prepare the heart for the comforts and blessings of faith in Christ, and for the witness and earnest of the Holy Spirit, and we should not despise the day of small things. When convincing arguments and affectionate persuasions only harden men in unbelief, and excite them to blasphemy, we must separate ourselves, and such as we can influence, from their contagious company, and we should endeavour to find out more teachable persons. The power which attends the word of the Lord Jesus will eventually distinguish it from other doctrines; he uses divers instruments and means, in exerting his power, but the work of healing our soul, or pulling down the kingdom of Satan, is wholly his own.

V. 13—20.

The enemy of souls does not much regard those, who use the name of Jesus, without faith or love, for the sake of their temporal interests or reputation. He and his associates know the power of the divine Saviour, and the efficacy of his word in the mouth of his faithful servants, but they despise hireling preachers and hypocritical professors of the Gospel, whom they will overcome to their destruction. Yet all the efforts of the devil and his servants, to disgrace or oppose the cause of Christ, will

—16. *He sends for the elders of Ephesus, 17. He states to them his ministry, conduct, and prospects; exhorting, warning, and instructing them with great fervency, and commending them to God and the word of his grace, 18—35. He prays with them; and takes a most affectionate farewell, leaving them in great sorrow, because they should see his face no more, 36—38.*

eventually redound to its honour, and to the credit of faithful ministers. The name of Jesus is magnified, when deceivers are detected and disgraced, when sinners are brought to confess and forsake their evil deeds, when they renounce their curious arts and ungodly gains, in obedience to the Gospel, and when they make expensive sacrifices to the truth, in the presence of all men. It would by no means be proper, that all books which have no relation to matters of religion, or are not altogether favourable to it, should be destroyed; but surely, such as are indecent and licentious, infidel or heretical in essential matters, would be condemned to the flames, if the word of God grew mightily and prevailed amongst us; not indeed by the sentence of the inquisitor, but by the voluntary choice of the possessors. Men would in that case neither read such books themselves, nor keep them in their houses to poison the principles and morals of their children or dependents, nor sell them, to contaminate the minds and murder the souls of others. Were all such books destroyed in this kingdom, their price would be found immensely more than fifty thousand pieces of silver! Will not then these Ephesian converts rise up in judgment against, and condemn, such professors of the Gospel, as trade in pernicious books and pamphlets; and who encourage such publications, for lucre's sake, as they must know are likely to do great mischief in the world? And is it not a proof that the word of God declines in its influence and authority, when books pretending to teach, and persons professing to exercise, forbidden and curious arts, are publicly advertised among us? But let no professor of the Gospel countenance such pretensions, whether they be human impositions, or diabolical delusions.

V. 21—29.

The enterprising spirit and unwearied diligence of conquerors, navigators, and others, are generally admired; but the same endowments, when directed by love to Christ and to the souls of men, commonly meet with ridicule and contempt! Yet surely our apostle laboured more abundantly than all the admired heroes of the world, as well as more than any other preacher of the Gospel; and happy and honourable are all they who have been influenced by the same motives to tread in some good measure in his steps. But when they are most active and successful, they may assure themselves of most opposition from the worshippers of mammon and the bigots of superstition. Indeed, these principles naturally coalesce: nor would idolatry, delusion, or vice, though congenial to

AND ^a after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto ^b him the disciples, and embraced ^c them, and departed for ^d to go into Macedonia.

2 And when he had gone over ^a those parts, and had ^e given them much exhortation, he came into ^f Greece,

3 And ^g there abode three months : and when ^h the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to ⁱ sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.

the human heart, meet with such firm support, did they not condescend to the temporal advantage of numbers who grow rich by them. Abuses in ecclesiastical systems, absurdities in creeds, and superstitions in religious worship, will be sure to engage many zealous supporters, whilst they encourage arts and trade, and bring no small gain to the craftsmen and other parties concerned. "Sirs, "ye know that by this craft we have our wealth," will be the private argument of such men one among another; while the honour of the great Diana, or of the system, the Church, or sect, will be the ostensible pretence. Nay, such devotees of mammon and superstition not only impose on others, but on themselves, and imagine that they really love their religion, whilst they only value the affluence derived from it! Their selfishness increases their bigotry, and their interested opposition to the Gospel cloaks its malignity under zeal for some absurd forms or observances; their wrath vents itself in furious zeal for the honour of their idol, and the servants of God are hated and persecuted, because they draw men off from those sins by which lucrative trades are supported. Such persons would eat up the sin of the people, and set their hearts upon their iniquities, whilst they vehemently contend for "the vain conversation delivered by tradition from their "fathers." (*Marg. Ref.*) Ecclesiastical history continually furnishes the student with such instances: and we can scarcely look around us in the world, but we see the part of Demetrius and the workmen acted over and over again, even to the filling of cities with tumult and confusion. It is as safe to contend with wild beasts, as with men who are thus enraged by bigotry and disappointed avarice; or who think that all arguments are answered, when they have shown that they grow rich by such measures as are opposed; and whatever side in religious controversies, or whatever name this spirit assumes, it is antichristian, and should be strenuously discountenanced by all the friends of truth and piety.

V. 30.—41.

Zeal for the honour of Christ, and love to the brethren, will induce zealous believers to venture into any danger, where these are concerned; but they who value the lives of useful persons, may sometimes interpose to moderate their zeal: and friends will often be raised up to them, from those who are strangers to vital religion, but have

4 And there accompanied him into Asia, ^a Sopater of ^b Berea; and of the Thessalonians, ^c Aristarchus and Secundus: and ^d Gaius of ^e Derbe, and ^f Timothy; and of Asia, ^g Tychicus and ^h Trophimus.

5 These, going before, tarried for us at ^a Troas.

6 And we sailed away from ^a Philippi, after ^b the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode ^c seven days.

observed their integrity and consistent behaviour. A confused mob can never effect any thing but mischief and madness. Like a wild beast, it sometimes turns upon and destroys those who meant to govern its operations, or to derive benefit from them; and generally the greater part of such riotous multitudes know not for what purpose they are come together. It is well when their fury evaporates in senseless clamour; for it is commonly more cruel and destructive. Yet He that ruleth the waves of the sea can also still the madness of the people; and in him we should trust ourselves, and all belonging to us, when such perils alarm us. Worldly policy and sagacity often abound where piety is utterly wanting: and prudent worldly men, by cajoling the deluded multitudes in their follies and absurdities, will prevail more with them, than others possibly could by truth and argument. What senseless fables have they implicitly credited, who would not believe the report of the Gospel! And how ridiculous have they often been in their religious opinions and worship, who have discovered the most good sense upon every other subject! For the god of this world blinds the minds of unbelievers. Let us, however, be thankful for prudent magistrates, who can by any means keep the peace and afford us protection, whilst we quietly worship God according to our consciences, and endeavour to promote the knowledge of his great salvation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XX. V. 1—6. The apostle probably concluded that it would be imprudent for him to continue at Ephesus, lest some other insurrection should be excited on his account: he therefore not long after affectionately took leave of the disciples, and set forwards for Macedonia. He then went through Troas, and had a favourable opportunity of preaching the Gospel: but not meeting Titus, whom he expected from Corinth, he was so desirous of visiting that city, that he proceeded on his journey without further delay. (*Marg. Ref.*) The first epistle to the Corinthians seems to have been written before he left Ephesus; and the second when he was in Macedonia, on his progress to Achaia, which probably took up more time than he expected. In the several Churches of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, he exhorted, instructed, and encouraged the disciples very copiously, concerning all things relating to their faith and practice, and the management of their common concerns. He was especially em-

y John xx. 1, 19.
20. 1 Cor. xvi.
2 Rev. i. 10.
2 1 Cor. xxi. 17-
21, 23, 24.
a 11. 11. 32. 46.
Luke xxii. 19.
xxiv. 29. 1 Cor.
x. 16, 17. xi. 23.
ke.
b 9. 11. 31. xxvii.
23. xxv. 1. 1.
18. 3. 1 Cor. xxi.
10. 2 Tim. iv. 2.
c 1. 13 Luke xxii.
12.

7 And upon ^y the first day of the week, when ^a the disciples came together ^a to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; ^b and continued his speech until midnight.

8 And there were many lights ^c in the upper chamber where they were gathered together.

9 And there sat in a window a certain young man, named Eutychus, ^d being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from ^e the third loft, ^e and was taken up dead.

10 And Paul went down, ^f and fell on

d Jon. i. 5, 6.
Mark xii.
56.

e 1 Kings xxi. 19.
f x. v. 19. 20.
Mark ix. 26.
g 1 K. i. 10. 21.
2. 2. 8. 23. 19.
34, 35.

played also in making collections for the poor Jewish converts at Jerusalem. When he had thus passed through Macedonia, he came into Greece, where he spent three months at Corinth and the adjacent places: and being then about to sail into Syria, he understood, that some Jews had laid a plan to meet him by the way, either to rob him of the money which he had collected, or to murder him: he therefore returned through Macedonia, and revisited those Churches. The persons here mentioned seem to have been the messengers appointed by the several Churches, to accompany him with their contributions to Jerusalem. (*Marg. Ref.*) Timothy had gone before the apostle into Macedonia; we here find him attending on him, and he was with him when he wrote the second epistle to the Corinthians: yet elsewhere he says, that he desired him to tarry at Ephesus, when he went into Macedonia. (1 Tim. i. 3.) It is probable, that the first epistle to Timothy was written when the apostle was in Macedonia, soon after he left Ephesus: so that we must conclude that Timothy returned thither before Paul came away; and that he staid there but a short time, before he, on some account, came to Paul in Macedonia. But he might return thither, and take up his stated residence there afterwards for some time, according to the report of ecclesiastical writers. The historian here again speaks in the first person plural, whence we may conclude, that he had now rejoined the company: and he continued with St. Paul, whilst some of the others went before to Troas, where a Christian Church had before this been founded; and thither after a short time the apostle followed them.

V. 7—12. It is not said, that the disciples were called together, as on a special occasion; but that they came together according to their general practice. Hence it is evident that Christians were accustomed to assemble for religious worship on the first day of the week; but the change from the seventh to the first seems to have been gradually and silently introduced by example, rather than by express precept. Their principal time of assembling appears to have been in the evening, either for fear of enemies, or because many servants in heathen families, and other poor persons. could not obtain liberty of meeting with them at an earlier hour. "Breaking of bread," or commemorating the death of Christ in the eucharist,

him, and embracing him, said, ^h Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

11 When he therefore was come up again, ⁱ and had broken bread, and eaten, ⁱ and talked a long while, ^k even till break ^{k 2. 2.} of day, so he departed.

12 And ^l they brought the young man alive, and ^m were not a little comforted.

13 ¶ And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, ⁿ minding himself to go aloft.

14 And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene:

15 And we sailed thence, and came

h Matt. ix. 36.
Mark v. 29.
Luke vii. 19. 14.
John xi. 11. 40.

l m 16. xl. 1. 2 Cor.
1. 1. Eph. vi. 22.
1 Thes. vi. 2.
1. 12. y. 11. 14.
2 Thes. vi. 16.
n Mark i. 35. vi.
31—33. 46.

was one chief end of their assembling: this ordinance seems to have been constantly administered every Lord's day; and probably no professed Christians absented themselves, after they had been admitted into the Church, unless they lay under some censure, or had some real hindrance. It may be gathered from the narrative that the apostle staid at Troas, in order to spend one Lord's day with them: and, preaching to them on this occasion, as he had seldom spoken to them before, and being about to leave them on the morrow, not knowing that he should ever see them again, his fervent affection led him to continue his discourse even till midnight. His audience no doubt in general attended to his exhortations with eagerness and delight; but one young man was overcome with sleep, and, falling from the third story, was taken up dead. He had probably been previously wearied with labour; and perhaps was not duly attentive to the important topics on which the apostle was discoursing. The enemies of the Christians accused them of holding nocturnal meetings in the dark; but the sacred historian informs us, that there were many lights in the room. And as it was most likely very much crowded, the windows seem to have been open to admit the air. The fall of Eutychus interrupted the religious exercises of the company, and excited in them much sorrow and anxiety. Paul, however, went down, and embracing the body, he exhorted them not to disquiet themselves, for his life was in him. It is probable that Eutychus had been dead; but the apostle was assured of his restoration to life, which perhaps took place at the moment when he spoke; and he afterwards gradually recovered health and strength. Accordingly the company returned to their sacred services; and, after the Lord's supper had been celebrated, the apostle, *instead of apologizing for the length of his discourse*, resumed the subject, and continued to converse with them till the day dawned, and it was time for him and his friends to set out on their journey, when the young man was brought among them alive and well, to their great comfort. We may easily conceive how many things would be said at Troas, about a night spent altogether in preaching and devotion; and had Eutychus lost his life, it would have given the enemies of the Gospel some colour for exclaiming against *unseasonable hours, long sermons, and enthusiastical irregularities.*

the next day over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllum; and the next day we came to Miletus.

16 For Paul^r had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia; for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem^a the day of Pentecost.

17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called^r the elders of the church.

18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, ^s from the first day that I came into Asia, ^t after what manner I have been with you, at all seasons,

19 ^u Serving the Lord^s with all humility of mind, and with ^v many tears and ^w temptations which beset me^a by the lying in wait of the Jews:

20 And how^b I kept back nothing that was ^c profitable unto you, but have shewed you, ^d and have taught you publicly, and from house to house;

21 ^e Testifying both ^f to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, ^g repentance towards God, and ^h faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

5 14 2 Cor. xi. 25. — b 7. 31. v. 2. Dent. iv. 5. Ps. xl. 9, 10. Ez. xxxiii. 7-9. 1 Cor. xv. 3. Col. i. 28. — c 1 Cor. xii. 7. xiv. 6. Phil. ii. 1. 2 Tim. ii. 16, 17. (21) 11 45 8. 42. Mark. iv. 31. — d 24. 10. 10. 25. xxi. 5. xxiii. 2. 1 John. 11-13. — e xviii. 4. xix. 17. Rom. i. 14. 1 Cor. i. 22. — f 38. 13. 14. 18. xxvii. 30. xxviii. 2. Ez. xiii. 20-22. Matt. ii. 15. 17. xxi. 31. 22. Mark. 15. xi. 12. Luke. xxi. 3. 23. xxi. 37. 40. 44. 47. Rom. ii. 4. 2 Cor. vii. 10. 2 Tim. ii. 25. 15. 18. 24. 26. 29. xxi. 31. John. iii. 15-19. 36. xxi. 31. Rom. i. 16. 11. 22-25. 15. 24. v. 1. x. 9. Gal. ii. 16. 20. 11. 22. 1 John. v. 1. 11-13.

V. 13—16. Assos, Trogyllum, and Miletus, were cities of Asia on the sea-coast; Mitylene was a city in the Isle of Lesbos, which, with Chios and Samos, was situated near the coast of Asia, in what is now called the Archipelago. Paul chose to go on foot from Troas to Assos, probably for the sake of retirement and private devotion, as his public work left him little time to be alone. But he might also intend to call at some place, or transact some business, unknown to us. When he had joined his company, he would not stop at Ephesus, as he knew that he should not easily get away from his beloved people there; and they therefore sailed past it to Miletus, a city about thirty miles further to the south. For the apostle seems to have had the direction of the vessel, which he could not have had, if merely a passenger; it is therefore probable that it belonged to some of his friends. His purpose was to make what haste he could to Jerusalem, that he might spend the feast of Pentecost there; perhaps hoping for some opportunity of usefulness among the Jews and proselytes who came to the feast, or of softening their prejudices against him; especially he might deem this the best time for dispensing the contributions that he carried, so as to promote a friendly communion between the Jewish and Gentile converts.

V. 17. The apostle could not with propriety visit Ephesus; but he desired to give some further instructions and admonitions to the elders of the Church which he had there planted, and accordingly he sent for them to come to him at Miletus. The same persons are in this chapter called elders or presbyters, and overseers or bishops; (28.) it must therefore be allowed, that these were not distinct orders of ministers in the Church at that time. Probably, when the apostles founded a Church, they appointed pastors over it, according to the numbers to be superintended, or the field of usefulness that was opened in the neighbourhood; these were at first called either elders, or overseers, that is, presbyters, or bishops, indifferently; and no one had any direct authority over the rest. By degrees the number of converts would increase, other Churches would be planted in the neighbourhood, and more pastors chosen. In the mean time the senior ministers, and such as were most eminent for wisdom, ability, piety, or usefulness,

would acquire a measure of influence and authority; and their juniors, both in their own church, and in others that had been planted from it, would naturally look up to them; thus they would be expected to take the lead in every business, especially in the ordination of ministers, in directing their labours, and in animadverting on such as turned aside to heretical doctrines, or immoral practices. Hence the name of Bishop or Inspector seems gradually to have been appropriated to one principal minister, to whom a measure of authority and distinction was insensibly annexed, and the title and rank of Presbyters were continued to the rest. It is evident that episcopacy prevailed generally and early in the primitive Church, and it seems to have been gradually introduced. There were many elders to the Church at Ephesus at this time, yet Christ afterwards addressed his epistle to the angel of the Church of Ephesus, (Rev. ii. 1.) which seems to mean the superintending pastor, who was an inspector over the elders. It appears to me at least, that neither episcopacy, nor any other species of Church-government, can be proved from Scripture to be exclusively of divine authority. But a moderate episcopacy has many advantages to recommend it; and the high claims and excessive authority, which soon began to be advanced and exercised by that order, and all the abuses of antichristian tyranny, supply the best arguments to those who would entirely exclude it from the Church. In this, however, as well as in other things, very much remains to be remedied and rectified among every description of Christians, before matters can be reduced to the scriptural standard. Every impartial man must allow, that if Timothy had been at this time bishop of Ephesus, in that sense for which some contend, the apostle would have given these elders some exhortation to pay a proper deference to his episcopal authority. To assert, as some have done, that these elders of Ephesus were indeed the diocesan bishops of all the Asiatic Churches, only exposes the cause which it is meant to support; for, besides the inexcusable liberty taken with the words of the Scripture, how could these bishops have been got together at so short a notice? Unless it be supposed, that they all resided at Ephesus, and left the charge of their dioceses to others, according to the too common custom of latter times!

22 And now, behold, I go bound
 in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not
 knowing the things that shall befall me
 there:
 23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth
 in every city, saying, that bonds
 and afflictions * abide me.
 24 But none of these things move
 me; neither count I my life dear unto
 myself, so that I might finish my course
 with joy, and the ministry which I have
 received of the Lord Jesus, to testify
 the gospel of the grace of God.
 25 And now, behold, I know, that ye
 all, among whom I have gone preaching
 the kingdom of God, shall see my face
 no more.
 26 Wherefore I take you to record
 this day, that I am pure from the blood
 of all men:
 27 For I have not shunned to declare
 unto you all the counsel of God.

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 in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not
 knowing the things that shall befall me
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 26 Wherefore I take you to record
 this day, that I am pure from the blood
 of all men:
 27 For I have not shunned to declare
 unto you all the counsel of God.

V. 13—21. 'Paul, a diligent imitator of Christ, hast-
 ening to bonds by a continued course, first, as it were,
 makes his will; in which he gives some account of his
 manner of life, defends the doctrine which he had
 taught, and exhorts the pastors of the Church to per-
 severance.' (*Beza.*) The apostle first called the atten-
 tion of these elders to the methods which he had pursued,
 and the conduct which he had manifested among them
 since his first coming into Asia; that is, the district so
 called, of which Ephesus was the capital. He had, at all
 seasons, however circumstanced, devoted himself to the
 service and worship of the Lord, in a humble, gentle,
 unassuming, and self-abasing manner, without aspiring at
 the honour that came from man, or being ambitious of
 distinction or power among them. His services had been
 attended with many tears of fervent affection, and great
 sorrow of heart, on account of the obstinate unbelief of
 the Jews, the blind idolatry of the Gentiles, the afflictions,
 temptations, and misconduct of the Christians, and his
 own manifold infirmities. He had also encountered many
 hardships, and been exposed to many perils, from the
 insidious malice of the Jews, which were a great trial to
 him, and might have tempted him to decline the service, or
 to be unfaithful in his ministry; yet they knew that he
 had not withheld from them any instructions, warnings,
 or encouragements, which could conduce to their spiritual
 advantage; this he had simply consulted, without regard-
 ing so much whether they, or others, were pleased or
 displeased with him. What he had taught publicly, he
 had also discoursed of privately; going from house to
 house among the converts, and such as were willing to
 receive him, to admonish, counsel, and instruct every
 one of them in particular, as his case required. He had,
 especially, with the utmost earnestness, insisted upon the
 absolute necessity of repentance towards God, the great
 Creator and Governor of the world, whose holy laws all
 have broken, and whose righteous displeasure they have
 incurred; before whom they ought therefore to humble
 themselves with godly sorrow, confessing their sins, show-
 ing their sincerity by works meet for repentance: with
 this he had connected his unvarying testimony to the
 necessity of "faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ," or a
 belief of those truths that relate to his Person, atone-
 ment, and mediation, and a reliance on him, as the divine
 Surety and Saviour of sinners, for all the blessings of
 salvation. This repentance and faith, when considered in

connexion with our need of them, the source from which
 they spring, and the invariable effects of them on the heart
 and life of him who continually exercises them, may be
 considered as the substance of Christianity, the religion
 of a sinner under a dispensation of mercy and grace.

V. 22—24. The apostle next informed the elders, that
 under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, which constrained
 him by the bonds of zeal and love to proceed, he was go-
 ing to Jerusalem, not knowing what persecutions or trials
 he might meet with there, save that the Holy Spirit tes-
 tified in every city where the Gospel was planted, by the
 mouth of some of the prophets there raised up, that bonds
 and afflictions awaited him. This, however, did not in
 the least deter him from the service which he had under-
 taken, or discompose his mind, as he made no account of
 these things; indeed, he did not value life, for his own
 sake, having no desire to live, except the glory of God
 and the benefit of the Church required it. For his grand
 object was to finish his Christian race with joyful assurance
 of meeting the approbation of his Lord, and of receiving
 the price of his high calling; and, in order to this, to
 execute faithfully till death the important ministry which
 the Lord Jesus had committed to him; and to testify to
 sinners of every nation, the glad tidings of the abundant
 mercy and grace of God, for the complete salvation of
 their souls.

V. 25—27. An immediate revelation seems to have
 been about this time made to the apostle, that he should
 no more revisit Ephesus, or see any of these elders again
 on earth. This made him the more earnest in his exhor-
 tations and admonitions; and he therefore testified to them,
 and called on them to bear witness for him, that he was
 guiltless of the blood of those who perished among them,
 or their flocks; as he had not declined, either from fear,
 or desire of their applause or friendship, to declare unto
 them the whole counsel of God, respecting the way of
 salvation by Christ for all true believers, and the certain
 destruction of all that neglect so great salvation; and re-
 specting all things pertaining to the doctrine, practice, and
 discipline of the Church. As he had been wholly preserved
 from ignorance or mistake about the truth and will of
 God in these things, so he had been kept from all un-
 faithfulness in respect of them. 'Hence we learn, that
 it is necessary for a pastor to declare to his people all
 that is necessary for them to believe and do, in order to
 salvation, in order that the guilt of their ruin may not

28 ^b Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to ^c all the flock, ^d over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you ^e overseers, ^f to feed ^g the church of God, ^h which he hath purchased with his own blood.

29 For I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous ⁱ wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 Also ^k of your own selves shall men arise, ^l speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

31 Therefore ^m watch, and remember, that ⁿ by the space of three years I ceased ^o to lie upon him. ^p (Whitby.) As it is probable that the apostle went, after this, into the neighbourhood of Ephesus, (2 Tim. iv. 13. Philem. 22.) some learned men think, that in saying, "I know that ye all shall see my face no more," he only meant to draw this conclusion from the predictions which were given of the sufferings which awaited him. The elders, however, seem to have understood him as speaking with certainty of what he knew by revelation, nor did he attempt to deceive them, though he saw them overwhelmed with grief. (38.)

V. 28. In imitation of the example which he had set them, and in expectation of that great account which they must give of their ministry, the apostle next warned the elders "to take heed to themselves," to their state, spirit, conduct, and doctrine, and to all the flock, over which they had been constituted superintendents, or overseers, "by the Holy Ghost." Their qualifications for the ministry had been derived from him; he had disposed them to undertake that service, he had directed those who selected and ordained them, and he had confirmed that appointment by his gifts and endowments. Some think that the twelve men before spoken of were especially intended, and that the gift of the Holy Spirit, by the laying on of the hands of Paul, was referred to. (Marg. Ref.) The great end of their pastoral office was, that they might "feed the Church of God," which he had "purchased with his own blood;" that they might continually dispense those pure and wholesome truths, which are the proper nutriment of the soul, and which, when it is regenerated, it desires, relishes, feeds on, and grows by, in knowledge, faith, hope, and holiness. The conversion of sinners, as part of this *chosen flock*, is implied in this commission. The most able critics have shown that the present is the genuine reading of the verse, though a few copies have "Church of the Lord," a phrase not used in the New Testament. The passage is a most decisive testimony to the Deity of Christ. The atonement and ransom of our souls is the blood of Jesus, who is as truly God, as man; and thus in his mysterious Person, as God and man, he purchased the Church with his own blood. This

not to ^q warn every one ^r a night and day ^s with tears.

32 And now, brethren, ^t I commend you to God, ^u and to the word of his grace, which is able ^v to build you up, ^w and to give you an inheritance among all them ^x which are sanctified.

33 I have ^y coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

34 Yea, ye yourselves know, ^z that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

35 I have ^{aa} shewed you all things, ^{ab} how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak; and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, ^{ac} "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

36 I have ^{ad} shewed you all things, ^{ae} how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak; and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, ^{af} "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

gave the infinite value to his sacrifice, and it suggests to his ministers the most powerful motives to faithfulness, diligence, patience, and fortitude in their work.

V. 29—31. To enforce these things still more, the apostle assured his brethren, that he certainly knew, by the Spirit of prophecy, that after he was gone from them, grievous, strong, and cruel wolves would break into the fold, and devour the sheep; these may either mean seducing teachers from other countries, intruding among them, and usurping authority, so as to fleece, scatter, or oppress the flock, for the gratification of their own avarice or ambition, or cruel persecutors, by whom many believers were butchered, and many professed Christians were tempted to apostatize. Besides these, however, there would others spring up from among themselves, starting heretical doctrines, corrupting the purity of the faith, disturbing the harmony of the Church, drawing off the people from their faithful pastors on various pretences, attaching many to them as their disciples, and thus forming scandalous sects and schisms. As the enemy sows such tares in the field, whilst men sleep, so Paul exhorted the elders on this account to watch, and be vigilant to observe and check the first appearance of such evils; remembering, that for three years together he had constantly warned them, one by one, by night as well as by day, bereaving himself of rest and refreshment, that he might seize on every opportunity for such admonitions, and that his earnest affection for their souls, joined with his foresight of these perversions, had caused him to mingle his warnings with many tears. *Three years.* (31.) (Note, xix. 8—12.)

V. 32—35. Having endeavoured to impress these pastors with a deep sense of the arduousness and importance of their work, the apostle concluded, by commending them to God, earnestly calling on them to rely wholly on his guidance, assistance, protection, and blessing; and calling on God to take their souls, and those of their flock, into his almighty and gracious keeping. He also commended them to the word of God's grace, as the rule of their conduct, the ground of their hope, and the source of their

e vii 60 xxi. 3. 36 ¶ And when he had thus spoken,
 2 Chr. vi. 13. he kneeled down, and prayed with them
 Dan. vi. 10.
 Luke xxi. 41.
 Job iii. 14.
 Phil. iv. 6.
 1 Sam. xx. 41.
 2 Sam. xv. 30.
 2 Kings xx. 3. Ebra x. 1. Job ii. 12. Ps cxxvi. 5 2 Tim. 1 4 Rev. vii. 17. xxi. 4.

consolation; as the Lord was able, according to his word, to build them up in faith and holiness, amidst all the temptations, trials, and delusions, to which they might be exposed, and at length to give them an inheritance in heaven, among all those, whom he had set apart for himself, and made meet by his sanctifying Spirit for that holy felicity. There he expected again to meet them, being kept through faith in the word of God, by his power, to complete salvation. He could appeal to them, that he had acted disinterestedly among them; though many of the Ephesians were rich, yet he had not coveted, or in any way sought for, any man's wealth, or secular advantages; nay, he had not accepted of that maintenance, to which he was fairly entitled, but had laboured at a manual employment to maintain himself and his companions. Thus he had showed them by his example the tendency of his doctrine, that from him, they, (even the *presbyters*, or *bishops*,) might learn, that it was their duty *thus to labour*, in order to maintain themselves, and to contribute to the support of their poor brethren, when weak and sick, or otherwise unable to maintain themselves; and that they ought to remember the words which the Lord Jesus had commonly used, as an important aphorism, "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" it is more happy to be able to give, than to be obliged to receive, and therefore better to labour and be frugal, than to indulge sloth and expense; there is more comfort and pleasure in giving than in receiving; there is more of grace, of love, of heaven, and of the divine image, in giving, than in receiving. This traditional speech so suited to the character of him, "who, being rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich," would not have been preserved for our use, if it had not thus been communicated in writing. With this example, instruction, and admonition to labour, disinterestedness, and liberality, the apostle closed his address to these elders; and his words could not but make a deep and durable impression on their minds.

V. 36—38. This solemn and affectionate address was concluded with humble and fervent prayer, and the whole company were so affected with the mingled passions of love and sorrow, that they wept exceedingly: especially they grieved to hear, that they were no more to behold the face of so faithful and affectionate a friend. 'This, which is St. Luke's own explication, leaves no room for ambiguity, which might be imagined in the expression 'used before.' (25.) (*Doddridge*.) It does not appear that there was a church at Miletus; for none are spoken of but the elders of Ephesus and Paul's companions.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—12.

Tumults and opposition may constrain a Christian or minister to remove from his station, or to alter his pur-

on Paul's neck, and kissed him; R Rom. xvi. 16. 1
 38 Sorrowing most of all for the words Cor xvi. 20. 1
 which he spake, that they should see 1
 his face no more. 1 And they accompa- 1
 nied him unto the ship. 1
 1 xv. 3 xxi. 5 16
 1 Cor. xvi. 11.

pose; but his employment and pleasure will be the same wherever he goes. Even believers need much exhortation, to render them habitually steadfast, zealous, prudent, and persevering in every good work. Christians should delight in commemorating their Lord's death at his table, and his resurrection, by observing his holy day; but the general contempt and profanation of the Christian sabbath, by the professed disciples of Jesus, and the withdrawing of so great a majority of the congregations where the Gospel is preached, when the Lord's supper is about to be administered, cyince the low state of vital religion among us, and tend to reduce it still lower. It shows a carnal state of mind, when people are soon wearied in the worship of God, and want to close it, for the sake of animal recreation or vain conversation. Doubtless it is inexpedient, on ordinary occasions, to lengthen out religious ordinances much beyond the usual time: yet surely Paul would be displeased, surprised, or grieved, to hear the professors of his doctrine complain of an instructive sermon, because it was *an hour long*; or of the length of the service, when it scarcely exceeded two hours! If we cannot wholly excuse Eutychus, for yielding to sleep at midnight during the apostle's copious exhortations, how inexcusable are they, who, in the middle of the day, and during a moderate service, make a practice of sleeping, as if best pleased when most composed to rest! Infirmary indeed requires tenderness, but such an indulgent habit of contempt should be treated with decided severity; they who thus offend, have cause to tremble lest some sudden judgment should cut them off in their sin, and leave them to perish without remedy; and such as desire to get the better of this temptation, should join earnest prayers with all other methods of keeping themselves awake; when this is neglected, they need not wonder that they are unsuccessful. Should a company of believers among us, on some remarkable occasion, spend a whole night in the exercises of religion, what exclamations, revilings, and derision, would it excite! Yet little is said, when the devotees of festive indulgence, fashionable dissipation, or more vulgar diversions, employ their nights in the most irregular manner; as if time spent in devotion broke in upon the order of families or the peace of society, far more than when dedicated to vain amusement, or bacchanalian revels! Or as if more earnestness were allowable in any thing, than in the service of God! Nay, many of us, who now count religion our chief joy, can remember a time, when we entrenched upon the hours of rest, for our frolics and pleasures, with far less reluctance, than we now should for the purpose of secret or social worship. So hard is it for spirituality to flourish in the heart of a fallen creature, under any culture! and so naturally and spontaneously do carnal affections grow and thrive there! The Lord, however, will take care of the concerns, and pardon the infirmities, of his people; and he will comfort them under all their tribulations, even when called to separate from those, whom they have most loved.

CHAP. XXI.

Paul and his friends leave Miletus, and arrive at Tyre ; where, finding disciples, they stay seven days, and part from them with prayer on the sea-shore, 1—6. They proceed to Cesarea, to the house of Philip, the Evangelist, whose four daughters prophesy, 7—9. Agabus foretells that Paul will be bound at Jerusalem : but he will not be dissuaded from going thither, 10—16. Arriving at Jerusalem, he re-

ports to James and the elders the success of his labours among the Gentiles, 17—

19. He is persuaded to purify himself at the temple, with four men who had a vow, 20—26 ; where he is set upon by some Jews from Asia, and in danger of being slain in a tumult, but rescued by the chief captain, who binds him with chains, and leads him to the castle, 27—36. He requests, and is permitted, to speak to the people, 37—40.

V. 13—21.

The Christian cannot be comfortable or prosperous without retirement. Popular ministers may preach, converse, or pray in company, to the edifying of others, and yet decline in their own souls, for want of self-examination, humiliation, and secret prayer, suited immediately to *their own case* ; nay, the most able preachers will generally cease to be very useful, if their personal religion is neglected, or hurried over in a formal manner. This the fervent Christian knows ; he will therefore redeem time for retirement, at the expense of many inconveniences : and the friends of popular ministers should consider this, and not too much intrude upon the solitude of those persons, in whose company they most delight. In prosecuting the work of God, our own inclinations, and those of our beloved friends, must often be crossed : we must not spend our time with them, when duty calls us another way, or when a prospect is before us of doing more essential good. As the office of ministers is of so great importance and difficulty ; to instruct, encourage, animate, or admonish those, who now are, or hereafter may be, employed in it, is a service of the greatest moment. To do real good to a pastor of the flock, is eventually to profit numbers : and they who have a talent for this service, and a proper call to it, should deem themselves highly honoured, and be satisfied sometimes to omit more public services, for the sake of it. But they, who are thus employed in instructing such as are to instruct others, should themselves be most unexceptionable characters, and be able to appeal to them respecting their own conduct at all seasons. All, who preach the Gospel, (whether blessed with living monitors, in some degree resembling Paul, or not,) should consider this charge as addressed to them, even as to the Ephesian elders : and as settling before them the proper conduct, disposition, and principles of a true minister of Christ. A proud, ambitious, selfish, and unfeeling heart is peculiarly opposite to the service of God in the pastoral office, or to the proper filling up of eminent stations in the church. Unless a man be clothed with humility, and softened into love and compassion, even his abilities, zeal, and diligence, will be disgusting and odious. Except we are ourselves affected with our subjects, how can we expect to affect others ? and how can we convince them, that we mean any thing by our exhortations, unless we persevere in our work amidst temptations and opposition ? We must not be men-pleasers ; nor may we “ keep back any thing

“ that is profitable,” whatever offence may be taken, or however well some persons would reward us for conniving at their errors, and conformity to the world. What we preach publicly, we should also be ready to inculcate privately, from house to house, as far as we have access to our hearers, or any prospect of doing them good ; and ordinary visits should be thus improved, as well as opportunities of this kind purposely sought for. Thus we shall get acquainted with the state of our people’s souls ; and whilst a personal address will often set a man right, extricate him from some perplexity, remove some difficulty, or stir him up to some duty, about which he had long hesitated, we shall learn to exercise our public ministry to better effect. Every part of divine truth ought, at one time or other, to be set before our congregations, and every duty inculcated ; but the great essentials, without which there can be no salvation, should be testified most earnestly and frequently ; nor can we have a better summary of them, than this of the apostle, even “ repentance “ towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ,” with their genuine fruits and effects ; without these no sinner can escape destruction, and with these none will come short of eternal life.

V. 22—31.

The powerful influences of the Holy Spirit bind the zealous Christian to his duty, in a manner perfectly consistent with the greatest conceivable liberty : even when he expects persecution and affliction, the love of Christ constraineth him to proceed. When he is satisfied respecting his state and duty, he is not moved with the prospect of difficulties or sufferings, he values his life chiefly that he may glorify the Lord with it, nor is it dear to him, for the sake of any of those things which carnal men pursue. His great desire is “ to finish his course with joy,” and to be welcomed by his Lord with “ Well done, good, and “ faithful servant ;” and if he has received from the Lord Jesus the office of the ministry, to testify to sinners the glad tidings of the grace of God, he will desire to live no longer, than he can execute it honourably and usefully ; that when the time shall come, when all “ those, among “ whom he hath gone preaching the kingdom of God, “ shall see his face no more,” he may be able to “ take “ them to record, that he is pure from the blood of all “ men, having never shunned to declare to them all the “ counsel of God,” according to the measure in which he

2 Tim. 37, 38 1
2 Tim. 38, 39 12
1 Tim. 1, 17
1 Tim. 2, 1
1 Tim. 4, 1
1 Tim. 5, 1

AND it came to pass, that after ^a we were gotten from them, ^b and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara:

e xxviii 6 Jun 13.

2 And ^c finding a ship sailing over unto ^d Phenecia, we went aboard, and set forth.

e xxviii 6 Jun 13.
d xxviii 6 Jun 13.
e xxviii 6 Jun 13.
f xxviii 6 Jun 13.
g xxviii 6 Jun 13.
h xxviii 6 Jun 13.
i xxviii 6 Jun 13.
j xxviii 6 Jun 13.
k xxviii 6 Jun 13.
l xxviii 6 Jun 13.
m xxviii 6 Jun 13.
n xxviii 6 Jun 13.
o xxviii 6 Jun 13.
p xxviii 6 Jun 13.
q xxviii 6 Jun 13.
r xxviii 6 Jun 13.
s xxviii 6 Jun 13.
t xxviii 6 Jun 13.
u xxviii 6 Jun 13.
v xxviii 6 Jun 13.
w xxviii 6 Jun 13.
x xxviii 6 Jun 13.
y xxviii 6 Jun 13.
z xxviii 6 Jun 13.

3 Now when we had discovered ^e Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into ^f Syria, and landed at ^g Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.

was enabled to become acquainted with it. When affectionate and faithful pastors are called away from those to whom they have been useful, they will be doubly earnest, that they may be succeeded by such persons as will take heed to themselves, and to all their flock, such as have indeed been made "Overseers by the Holy Ghost," and who will feed them with the wholesome doctrine of divine truth. And what ought we to shrink from, when the benefit of that beloved company, "the Church of God," whom he hath purchased with his blood," requires it at our hands? It cannot but lie heavy upon the mind of the faithful minister, when about to be removed from his beloved charge, to reflect upon the various perils to which they will be exposed, from the subtlety and malice of Satan, from cruel persecutors, and crafty seducers, and from such as cause divisions, and speak perverse things to draw away disciples after them. However, he can only warn them and their teachers, to watch; for if the enemy and his servants are so vigilant and indefatigable, we ought by no means to be heedless and indolent. If a minister, in such a case, can take the people to witness, that he hath been instant in season, out of season, by day and by night, warning and exhorting them with all earnestness and affection, it will give emphasis to his parting admonitions, and confidence to his own heart when he is constrained to leave them.

V. 32—38.

When we part, we should commend each other to God, and the word of his grace, as able to build them up for, and put them in possession of, their holy inheritance; and the people ought to commend themselves and each other to God and his word in the same manner, that they may be kept by his power, according to his promise, and in obedience to his precept, through faith unto eternal salvation. But none will obtain that inheritance, except those whom the Lord hath sanctified. It is peculiarly incumbent on those, who teach others to aspire after a heavenly treasure, to be themselves indifferent about earthly things, and free from all suspicion of coveting any man's gold or silver, or apparel. But, alas! few who claim the honour of being the successors of the apostles in office and authority are disposed to affect an equality with them in self-denial, and a willingness to labour without emolument, and in circumstances of comparative poverty! It is indeed probable that

4 And ^b finding disciples, ^a we tarried there seven days; who ^c said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

b xix. 1. Matt. x.
11. 2 Tim. 1. 17.
1 Tim. 6. 7. xxviii.
11. Rev. 1. 10.
1 Tim. 10-12. x. 22.
30.

5 And when we had accomplished those days, we departed, and went our way; ^d and they all brought us on our way, ^e with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and ^f we kneeled down on the shore and prayed.

1 Tim. 2. xlvii. 10.
1 Tim. 30.
1 Tim. 30. xlvii. 11.
12. Josh. xlvii. 12.
13. 2 Chr. xlvii. 13.
14. Neh. xlvii. 14.
15. Matt. xlvii. 15.
16. 1 Tim. 40. xlvii. 16.
17. 1 Kings xlvii. 17.
18. 1 Tim. 40. xlvii. 18.
19. 2 Cor. 11. 13.
20. 1 Tim. 11. 11.
21. 1 Tim. 11. 11.
22. 1 Tim. 11. 11.
23. 1 Tim. 11. 11.
24. 1 Tim. 11. 11.
25. 1 Tim. 11. 11.
26. 1 Tim. 11. 11.
27. 1 Tim. 11. 11.

6 And when we had ^g taken our leave one of another, we took ship; ^h and they returned home again.

their authority would be far less questioned, if this were their conduct and spirit. The zealous and prudent minister of Christ, however, who is wise to win souls, will not tenaciously demand even his *due maintenance*, when it would interfere with his usefulness; but will "suffer all things" rather than hinder the Gospel of Christ." Should peculiar circumstances require or admit of it, his own hands would minister to his necessities, and those of his family or friends: that he might show the people all his principles reduced to practice; and teach even the poor of the flock thus to labour, that they might be able to assist in supporting the weak; and that every one might learn to inquire, not What gain shall I make? but What good can I do? according to the words of our gracious Lord, who hath taught us, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive:" a sentence, that should be written on every heart, especially on that of every minister of the Gospel. This mind was in Christ Jesus; may it be ours also! They, who thus exhort and pray for one another, may have many weeping seasons and painful separations; but their sorrow shall be turned into joy, and they will soon meet before the throne, to part no more. May the Lord supply his whole Church with bishops, presbyters, and pastors of every description, who drink deep into this spirit, and who closely follow the steps of this blessed apostle and these Ephesian overseers of that flock, which he purchased with his own blood!

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI. V. 1—6. The words translated "after" "we had gotten from them," literally mean, "being torn from them;" and denote that powerful reciprocal affection, which cemented the hearts of these Christian friends, and rendered their final separation at the call of duty so very painful, and the effect of so violent an effort. Coos and Rhodes were well known islands in the Egean Sea: Patara was a city of Lycia upon the continent of Asia. Perhaps the ship, in which Paul and his friends had passed thus far, was bound to this port; they, however, met with another, that was about to sail directly into Phenicia, in which they embarked; and, passing between the island of Cyprus and the coast of Syria, they landed at Tyre. Here they sought out the disciples of their Lord: and, as the most dangerous part of their voyage was past, and time enough remained for their journey to Jerusalem before the Pentecost, they continued here a week; in order to spend one Lord's day with their brethren, as well as to

7 And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

8 And the next day, we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto ^aCaesarea; and we entered into the house of ^aPhilip the evangelist, (which was one of the seven,) and abode with him.

9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

10 And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named ^bAgabus.

11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews

at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus.

14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

15 And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

16 There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old

confer together on the interesting subject of their common faith. Some disciples here also cautioned Paul not to go up to Jerusalem: they were shown by the Spirit of prophecy, that he would meet with great sufferings and trials, if he went thither; and they supposed that he might lawfully decline the journey and avoid the danger: but he judged otherwise. 'Does the Spirit of God then oppose himself? By no means. But they, understanding, by the revelation of the Spirit, what danger awaited Paul, out of love, and not by any special command of the Spirit, entreated him not to go up to Jerusalem, being ignorant of what the same Spirit had commanded Paul.' (Beza.) (Note, xx. 22—24.) When they therefore departed, the whole company of the disciples, with their families, attended them to the sea-shore, with the greatest expressions of respect and affection; and there they all kneeled down, in the most solemn and humble manner, and united in fervent prayer, for each other's protection and felicity. Should a company of believers, in this Christian country, and in the environs of one of our great commercial cities, imitate this example, they would doubtless be derided as a fanatical or a hypocritical set of people! It seems evident from this circumstance, that kneeling was the more general posture for public prayer, in the primitive Church; otherwise they would scarcely have used it in such an inconvenient situation.

V. 7—14. The apostle and his friends finished their course by sea, by sailing from Tyre to Ptolemais, a city on the sea-coast of Galilee, so called, because rebuilt by Ptolemy, king of Egypt; having before been called Accho, (Judg. i. 31.) Here too they met with disciples, with whom they spent but one day, and on the next they journeyed by land to Caesarea. Philip, one of the seven first deacons, whose usefulness as an evangelist is before recorded, (Marg. Ref.) now resided in this city; and probably he had laboured there and in the adjacent parts, during the intervening years. He had the peculiar honour of having four daughters, all endued with the gift of prophecy; and perhaps they gave intimations to Paul of his

approaching trials. As, however he and his friends stayed at Caesarea several days; Agabus, of whom we read before, (xi. 28.) came from Judea, properly so called, (for Caesarea lay in that part of the land which belonged to the kings of Israel, not in that belonging to the kings of Judah;) and, with a significant emblem, he certified Paul by the Holy Spirit, that at Jerusalem he would be seized as a malefactor by the Jews, who would cause him to be fettered, hand and foot, and delivered to the Gentiles, as the Lord Jesus had been. This prediction induced both the apostle's companions and the Christians of Caesarea earnestly to dissuade him from his intended journey, out of love to him, and the value which they set on his useful life and labours. But he considered himself bound in duty to accomplish the service with which he had been intrusted, of conveying the oblations of the Gentile converts to the Church at Jerusalem; and on this and other accounts, he was steadfastly purposed to proceed, whatever persecutions might await him. The prospect indeed of bonds and imprisonment could not move him; yet the affectionate entreaties of his friends exceedingly distressed his feeling mind; and he earnestly expostulated with them, for thus weeping and breaking his heart with their ill-timed sorrows, which unfitted him for his duty, when they ought to have encouraged him in it: for, by the grace of God, he was ready either to be bound, or put to death as a martyr, for the honour of his beloved Saviour, either now at Jerusalem, or whenever he should be called to do it. When therefore they saw him fixed in his purpose, they no more attempted to dissuade him from it; but submitted to the will of God, as to the event, being satisfied that he could and would over-rule it for good. It was not long after, that the apostle was conveyed back to Caesarea, a prisoner; and, as he had liberty to see his friends, they would again have the opportunity of conversing with him. Evangelist, (3.) 'Evangelist is the name of an office, in the apostles' times.' (Hammond.) 'Paul was not bound personally by the Jews, but by Romans, at their instigation, and on their account.' (Whitby.)

disciple, with whom we should lodge.

17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

18 And the day following, Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law;

21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying, That they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.

23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;

24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

V. 15, 16. When the time allotted for the apostle's stay at Cesarea was expired, "they got together those things which were to be taken with them," and went up to Jerusalem. It is probable they travelled on foot; and some think that they carried their luggage themselves; others that they laded beasts of burden with it. Perhaps it had been conveyed by sea from Ptolemais to Cesarea, though they journeyed by land; but as they were now travelling into the interior part of the country, it became necessary to make some other preparation for the conveyance of it. In this journey they were attended by some of the disciples of Cesarea, who "brought with them," or rather, "brought them to," one Mnason, a native of Cyprus, who then lived at Jerusalem, at whose house the apostle and his company might be conveniently lodged, during the hurry of the feast. He was an old disciple: perhaps he had been a disciple of Jesus, or he had joined the Church soon after the day of Pentecost, and had all along maintained, as it must be supposed, a consistent character, and was now matured in wisdom and grace.

V. 17.—21. The Christians at Jerusalem, to whom St. Paul first applied, gladly welcomed him; rejoicing in the success of his ministry, and in the fruits of the faith and love of the Gentile converts. The next day he introduced the messengers of the Churches to the apostle James, who seems to have been the only one of the twelve then residing at Jerusalem, and who peculiarly superintended the concerns of the Church in that city: all the elders were also convened on that occasion. After affectionate salutations, Paul proceeded to relate to them particularly, what God had done by his ministry, since he last saw them: at which they rejoiced, and glorified God. They however entreated him to observe how many *tens of thousands* of Jewish converts to Christ were now assembled at

Jerusalem, who were all zealous for the Mosaic ceremonies, and greatly prejudiced against him for his supposed opposition to them. For they had been informed, and had generally imbibed the opinion, that he every where instructed the Jews to *apostatise* from Moses; inculcating it as a matter of bounden duty, that they should not circumcise their children, or observe any of the customs of the ritual law. In this they had been misinformed; for though the apostle had shown that none were bound to observe the ceremonial law, and that they must by no means place any dependence on such obedience for justification; yet he had never forbidden the Jewish converts to observe it as a matter of expediency, when their communion with their Gentile brethren would admit of it. *Elders.* (18.) 'All the bishops of Judea, saith Dr. Hammond, without one word to prove it' (*Whitby*.) That learned writer's zeal for episcopacy leads him frequently to express himself in a manner, which seems to imply that there were no presbyters in the primitive Church; perhaps he was not aware, that this supposition would reduce all ministers, above deacons, to an entire parity of order, as effectually as either the presbyterian, or the independent, plan could do. *Many thousands.* (20.) "Or many tens of thousands." (*Gr.*) This can hardly mean less than forty or fifty thousand: and though a considerable part of this vast number might come from other places to keep the feast, yet it can scarcely be doubted, but that there were so many Christians stately residing at Jerusalem, as to form several distinct congregations; yet the whole is spoken of as one Church. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 22—26. As disadvantageous reports had been circulated concerning Paul, James and the elders inquired of him, What it would be advisable to do, in order to obviate their effects? For as his coming would soon be known, the

k xxiv. 19.

i vi 12, xiii 50
 xiv. 2, 5 19
 xvi. 5, 6 13
 xvii. 12 1 Kings
 xxi 25
 xxv 3 v Luke
 xvi 21
 xxi 12
 xxi 26
 xxi 5, 6
 c. 21, 13, 14
 xxiv 5, 6 12
 xxvi 40, 21
 p. Jer vii 4, 6c
 1 am 1 10.

27 And when the seven days were almost ended, ^k the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, ^l stirred up all the people, ^m and laid hands on him,

28 Crying out, ⁿ Men of Israel, help: ^o this is the man that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further, ^p brought Greeks also into the temple,

and hath polluted this holy place.

29 (For they had seen before with him in the city, ^q Trophimus an Ephesian, ^r whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

30 And ^s all the city was moved, and the people ran together; ^t and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

multitude would certainly come together, to inquire into the reasons and motives of his conduct; and much disturbance might arise from their prejudices, if nothing were done to satisfy them. They therefore advised him previously to adopt an easy and effectual method of removing their prejudices. They had among them four persons, who were under a Nazarite's vow, the term of which was near expiring; and they proposed to Paul to join with them as one of the company, that he might purify himself, and bear a part in the expenses of the customary sacrifices, when the time came for them to shave their heads upon the completion of their vow. (*Notes, Num. vi.*) As this would be a public transaction, his concurrence in it would soon be known; and thus the whole multitude would at once be convinced that they had been misinformed, and that the apostle himself walked orderly, according to the prescriptions of the law. This conclusion seems to have been rather stronger than the real case would admit of. The apostle had before performed a vow of a similar nature, (xviii. 18.) and he doubtless paid some regard to the Mosaic law as a matter of expediency, but he does not appear to have habitually observed it, as may be inferred from his own words. (*Marg. Ref.*) They probably meant, that he attended to the legal ceremonies, as far as his intimate communion with uncircumcised persons would permit him; but it may be questioned whether this, if it had been fully explained, would have satisfied the multitude. James and the elders, however, avowed, that they meant nothing contrary to their former determination concerning the Gentile converts; and the apostle, complying with their counsel, took the necessary steps for joining with the Nazarites in their purifications and oblations. It has been questioned whether, on this occasion, he or his advisers acted in strict consistency with Christian simplicity; and it should be remembered, that, though the apostles were infallibly preserved from mistaking, corrupting, or mutilating the doctrine, which they were intrusted to communicate to the Church, yet they were not rendered infallible to their personal conduct; in many things they acknowledged, and it is evident they all offended and were to be blamed. Perhaps it would be found very difficult wholly to defend the apostle from the charge of temporizing, accommodating, or refining too much in this matter. His deference to the judgment of his brethren, his desire of becoming all things to all men, and his willingness to conciliate the Jewish believers, seem to have carried him rather too far; and he was led to hold out a greater degree of regard to the Mosaic law, than he showed in his general conduct.

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The concession, however, did not answer the intended purpose, but was the immediate occasion of his predicted sufferings. 'To be at charges with Nazarites was both a common, and a very popular thing among the Jews.' Maimonides asserts that a person who was not himself a Nazarite, might bind himself by a vow to take part 'with one in his sacrifice.' (*Doddridge*.) This, however, not being mentioned in the law, was rather complying with custom and tradition, than showing a regard for the ceremonies of Moses. 'James and the brethren thought it most regular and convenient, that the Jewish ritual should still be observed by those of the circumcision who believed in Christ. And, considering what tribulation the Church at Jerusalem must otherwise have been exposed to, and how soon Providence intended to render the practice of it impossible, it was certainly the most orderly and prudent conduct to conform to it, though it were looked upon by those that understood the matter fully, (which it was not necessary that all should,) as antiquated and ready to vanish away.' (*Doddridge*.)—The Jewish Christians at Jerusalem and in Judea might comply with the law more easily and exactly, than their brethren could in other countries, who were joined in the same Churches with the Gentile converts: Does not the epistle to the Hebrews, probably written by the apostle when a prisoner at Rome, show, that he thought it of great importance, even to the Christians in Judea, to understand that the Mosaic law had no longer any validity, and that he considered their attachment to it as greatly unfavourable to their proficiency in true religion?

V. 27—30. As the apostle could not enter on his purification till the third day after his arrival at Jerusalem, and as he made his defence before Felix, (which seems to have been seven or eight days after he was apprehended in the temple,) only twelve days after he came to Jerusalem, (xxiv. 11.) so we must render the first clause, "when the seven days were about to be accomplished," that is, the seven days which had been fixed on and mentioned to the priest, as the term, at the end of which the sacrifices would be offered, and the vow performed. Some Jews from Asia, who had known Paul when he preached there, saw him in the court of the temple, whither he went to the priests about the sacrifices to be offered; and, being actuated by a furious and bigoted zeal, they excited a tumult, and seized upon him as a profaner of that sacred place; calling earnestly on all true Israelites to assist them in a cause, in which their religion and national honour were at stake: for that was the man, who had every where taught men to disregard their title to be the peculiar people

31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the ^a chief captain of the band, ^b that all Jerusalem was in an uproar :

32 Who immediately ^c took soldiers and centurions, ^d and ran down unto them : and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left ^e beating of Paul.

33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be ^b bound with two chains ; ^c and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

34 And ^d some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude : and when he could not ^e know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried ^f into the castle.

35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers ^g for the violence of the people.

36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, ^h Away with him.

37 And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, ⁱ May I speak unto thee ? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek ?

38 Art not thou that Egyptian, ^j which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers ?

39 But Paul said, ^k I am a man *which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in ^l Cilicia,* ^m a citizen of no mean city : and I beseech thee, ⁿ suffer me to speak unto the people.

40 And when he had given him license, Paul stood ^o on the stairs, ^p and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made ^q a great silence, he spake unto them in the ^r Hebrew tongue, saying,

of God, to violate the law of Moses as abrogated, and to despise the temple as about to be destroyed ; and to show his contempt and enmity the more, they averred that he had brought uncircumcised Gentiles into the holy place to profane it. In this they were mistaken ; for, having seen Paul walking in the city with Trophimus, a Gentile convert, they took it for granted that he had also brought him into the temple. This out-cry soon brought the multitudes from every part of the city, and Paul was dragged as a criminal to be put to death *without the sanctuary*, lest it should be defiled with his blood : at the same time the doors were shut, that he might not escape to the horns of the altar for refuge, and that no other Gentiles might enter there. There was a court appropriated to the Gentiles, in which Trophimus might legally have worshipped, but the insurgents supposed that Paul had taken him into the courts, into which none but Jews and circumcised proselytes might enter.

V. 31—36. It is said that the Jews claimed the liberty of putting to death, without any legal process, such uncircumcised persons as entered the inner courts of the temple ; but this was not applicable to Paul. However, in the fury of their zeal, they were about to kill him ; but Lysias, the commanding officer of the Roman forces at Jerusalem, being also the tribune, or captain over a thousand men, hearing of the riot, immediately took the officers and soldiers under his own command, or part of them, and hastened to quell it. His presence induced those who were beating Paul, intending to put him to death by blows with stones and staves, to suspend their violence ; and Lysias, from their rage, concluding that he must be some desperate malefactor, ordered him to be bound with two chains, and demanded who he was, and of what crime he had been guilty ? But not being able to learn any thing from the incoherent clamours of the mob, he ordered him to be conveyed to the castle, which stood

on an eminence near the temple, being the station of the Roman soldiers that kept guard there. When the soldiers had brought Paul to the stairs that led to the entrance of the castle, they were obliged to carry him, to prevent the people from violently rushing upon him, and killing him ; for they all furiously followed after, exclaiming, " Away with him." or " Kill him." (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 37—40. When the apostle was conveyed into the castle, out of the reach of the multitude, he desired leave of the tribune to speak to him, who was surprised to hear him readily use the Greek language, as he supposed him to have been an Egyptian, who some time before had made an insurrection in the city, and, leading forth a numerous banditti, had done great mischief ; and when his followers were destroyed or dispersed, he had escaped, so that it was natural for Lysias to suppose Paul to be the same person, attempting to excite new disturbances. The apostle, however, assured him that he was a Jew, and a native of Tarsus, and so a citizen of an eminent city ; he therefore begged of him, that he might be permitted to address the multitude, in order to silence their clamours and rectify their misapprehensions ; by which the tribune also would learn who he was, and what he had done. Accordingly, having got permission, he placed himself on the top of the stairs, and made a signal with his hand to the multitude, that he wanted to speak to them ; and, curiosity concurring with other motives, they observed a profound silence, whilst he addressed them in the Hebrew tongue, at least in that dialect of it which was generally used. *Four thousand, &c.* Josephus mentions thirty thousand men, whom this Egyptian, (whose name is not known,) had collected together ; but it is probable that he led forth only four thousand, and that the rest came to him in the wilderness ; or only four thousand of the company were *murderers, sicarii, from sica*, a short sword, which they concealed under their garments, till an occasion

XXII 28. XXXI 10. 10. John XVI 6. 7. 22. XXXI 20. John XVI 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945. 946. 947. 948. 949. 950. 951. 952. 953. 954. 955. 956. 957. 958. 959. 960. 961. 962. 963. 964. 965. 966. 967. 968. 969. 970. 971. 972. 973. 974. 975. 976. 977. 978. 979. 980. 981. 982. 983. 984. 985. 986. 987. 988. 989. 990. 991. 992. 993. 994. 995. 996. 997. 998. 999. 1000.

bvi 54. xxi 22. Luke xxi 16. John xix 15.

i 19. xix 36. Matt x 15-16. Luke xxi 15.

k 7. 35. 37. Matt x 11. 1 Cor iv 13.

l ix 11. 50. xxi 3. xxi 34. Matt 9. xxi 25. 41. Matt 27. xxi 27. 29. xxi 27. 37. 1 Pet 11. 15. 16.

p 55. 2 Kings 12. 13. q xxi 17. xxi 18. xxi 33. r xxi 33. s xxi 1. xxi 11. Luke xxi 38. John 12. 1. 13. 17. 20. Rev 12. 11. xv 15.

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CHAP. XXII.

The apostle declares before the people the place of his birth, his education, his zeal against the Gospel; his conversion, and commission from Jesus to preach to the Gentiles, 1—21. At the mention of the

Gentiles, the people furiously exclaim against him; and the chief captain orders to examine him by scourging, 22—24; which he avoids by pleading the privilege of a Roman citizen, 25—29. He is brought before the council, 30.

was afforded them of assassinating the objects of their vindictive cruelty.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—16.

Wherever zealous Christians travel, they will inquire after, and get acquainted with, their brethren in the Lord; for they delight in their company, and desire to do them good and get benefit from them. But even this sweet and endeared communion of the saints must not induce them to prolong their stay together, beyond what other duties admit of. Fervent social prayer abates the poignancy of our sorrow, when constrained to separate from those whom we love; and this is peculiarly seasonable, when sharp afflictions or important services are before us. Our children too should be admitted to such scenes of earnest devotion, that their tender minds may be early impressed with a sense of the excellency and importance of religion; thus we may hope, that, when they grow up, they will be evidently partakers of the blessing, and endued with spiritual gifts for the edification of others also, which should be considered as the greatest favour which the Lord can bestow on us, with respect to our offspring. The path of duty will eventually be that of safety; yet it often leads into many apparent, or temporary dangers and difficulties, the prospect of which may induce those, who value the useful lives of eminent persons, to dissuade them from the services allotted to them; but if they are satisfied of their call in Providence, they should not turn aside, out of concern or affection for their friends, any more than from fear of their enemies. But it is an extraordinary attainment, for the same man to be so firm and inflexible in following the dictates of his own conscience, as to be habitually ready to endure bonds, or face death, for the Lord's sake, and yet so full of tenderness and sympathy, as to be more affected by the sorrows of his friends, than by the prospect of his own sufferings. When we have given the best counsel that we can, to those who conscientiously desire to know the will of God, and yet find that they are not convinced, or persuaded, by what we have urged, we should desist, and acquiesce in the will of the Lord, who can educe good from those measures and events, which seem to us undesirable or inexpedient. In our endeavours to do good to our brethren, we should introduce them to the acquaintance of those, who have been a comfort or benefit to us; and "old disciples" should be accessible, as well as careful to set their younger brethren an example of humility, spirituality, steadfastness, zeal, prudence, candour, and enlarged love; which may evince that their dependence on the Lord and devotedness to him have increased, according to the years during which they have known him.

V. 17—26.

What a striking proof does it afford us of the weakness and depravity of human nature, that so large a proportion of the disciples of Christ, even in the days of the apostles, were exceedingly disaffected to the most eminent minister that perhaps ever lived! Neither his extraordinary conversion, his blameless character, his peculiar endowments, his extensive labours and usefulness, nor his patient sufferings in the cause of Christ, nor yet the oblations which he bestowed so much pains to collect, and bring from the Gentile converts to their Jewish brethren, could conciliate their esteem and affection: seeing that he would not render that bigoted respect to the antiquated Mosaic ceremonial, with which they had been used to regard it! Nor could even the authority of James and the pious elders pacify their minds, or prevent their tumultuously assembling together, when they heard that he was come to Jerusalem. How watchful then should we be against prejudices of every kind, and against those misrepresentations of men's principles and conduct, from which they commonly originate! And how patient should we be, if called to have fellowship with this great apostle in this affliction: and to endure the suspicions and coldness of those whom we most esteem and love! We ought indeed to use all proper methods of rectifying the judgments, and conciliating the affections of our brethren, as far as their misapprehension can interfere with our usefulness; yet we should watch against the temptation of conniving at those errors or evils, which are the general source of prejudices, and which cannot properly be countenanced. When accommodation is allowed to infringe upon our simplicity and godly sincerity, it will seldom produce any good effect. Our brethren will not be satisfied unless we go to the full length of their sentiments; others will begin to suspect our integrity, and to hesitate concerning us, and it is in vain to attempt conciliating the favour of graceless bigots, and furious zealots of a party, from whom we shall commonly do well to keep at a distance. But much wisdom, integrity, and humility, are requisite, to guide us in the middle way between an uncompromising inflexibility in things of small consequence, and a temporizing spirit in respect of important truth. Yet the Lord will preserve his upright servants from fatal mistakes; though he may see good to leave them to err in matters of less importance, and in some particular instances.

V. 27—40.

They, who idolize notions, or the form of godliness, and hate the power of it, will misrepresent or condemn that conduct which God most approves and blesses: and if part of the truth cannot be misrepresented and rendered sufficiently odious to exasperate a sect, or a mob, against the

MEN, brethren and fathers, hear ye ¹ my defence ² which I make now unto you.

2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith.)

3 I am verily a man ¹ which am ² a Jew, ³ born in Tarsus, ⁴ a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city, ⁵ at the feet of Gamaliel, ⁶ and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, ⁷ and was zealous towards God, as ye all are this day.

4 And ¹ I persecuted ² this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

5 As ¹ also the high-priest doth bear me witness, ² and all the estate of the elders: ³ from whom also I received letters unto ⁴ the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

6 And it came to pass, ¹ that as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto ² Damascus, ³ about noon, suddenly

there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, ¹ Saul, Saul, ² why persecutest thou me?

8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, ¹ I am Jesus of Nazareth, ² whom thou persecutest.

9 And they that were with me ¹ saw indeed the light, and were afraid: ² but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

10 And I said, ¹ what shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus: ² and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

11 And ¹ when I could not see for the glory of that light, ² being led by the hand of them that were with me I came into Damascus.

12 And ¹ one Ananias, ² a devout man according to the law, ³ having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

13 Came unto me, and stood, and

Gen iii 9 wrl.
8 xxii 11 i.
Ex vi 4. (Sam.
i 10

u 2 6 xliii.
22-26 Jer i.
18 Matt xxvii.
23 i T u 13

1 16 10 xl.
11 Matt ii 23
v xxvi 14, 15
Ex xvi 7, 9.

1 Sam. viii 7.
Zeck ii 6.
Matt x 40-
42 xxv 40, 45.

1 Cor xii 13.
26, 27
2 ix 7 Dan x 7.

2 John xii 29, 30.
b ii 37 ix 6 x.
33 xvi 30 Pa.
xxv 8 9 xliii 8-10

c 12-16 xxvi 15
-16.

d ix 8, 9.
e xiii 11. Is xliii 16.

f See on ix 10-18
g xlii 2 xvii 4
h Luke ii 25.
i 3 v 12 22
Cor vi 8 xlviii 12

objects of their detestation, some false accusation will be devised, to effect the purpose; and, as the cause of God is supposed to be at stake, all means are sanctified, by which the help and concurrence of multitudes can be ensured. On these occasions the professed worshippers of God often copy the example of the most infuriated idolaters, (*Notes*, xix, 23-41.) and innocency, or excellency, is no security to a man's life; for, in popular tumults, all discrimination of character, and distinction between truth and error, are confounded. The Lord, however, is at all times a Refuge for his people, and he sometimes employs the fury of their enemies to raise them up friends among such as are strangers to him, who become favourable to them, because they find that they are not those vile characters, which they have been represented or suspected to be. And if he gives us an opportunity of pleading our own cause before those that are prejudiced against us, we should always prepare to speak in behalf of the truth, and to recommend the Gospel of Christ to their serious attention.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII. V. 1-5. The apostle addressed the enraged multitude in the customary style of respect and good-will, as "men and brethren," and seeing many principal persons present, he also added, "fathers," to denote, that he was ready to render them all due honour and obedience, consistent with the will of God, notwithstanding their indignation against him. When therefore they found that he spoke thus composedly to them in the Hebrew dialect, they observed a strict silence; and he proceeded to show that he was a Jew, and not a Gentile or

a proselyte; and that though born at Tarsus, that he had been educated in Jerusalem by Gamaliel, the most eminent of their Rabbies. At his feet he had been used to sit, according to the custom of those times, when the scholars sat on the ground, or on low seats near the teacher, who was raised above them on a sort of throne. He had therefore been instructed after the most accurate manner, in the law of Moses, and in the traditions of the elders, and was very zealous for their mode of worshipping God, as he knew them to be at that time. Of this he had given abundant proof by persecuting those who sought the favour of God in the way of the Gospel; doing all in his power to get them put to death, or laid up in prison, without distinction whether they were men or women. To this the high-priest, who was then in power, could bear witness, as well as the other members of the Sanhedrim; for he had received letters from them to the brethren, or the Jews at Damascus, against the Christians in that city. But he would now relate to them the manner in which he had since been induced to embrace and preach that doctrine, which he then so furiously persecuted. *Defence.* (1.) *Or apology.* The sacred writers never use this word, or the correspondent verb, except when the person spoken of defended himself from some charge brought against him. They never in one instance call the authoritative preaching of the Gospel an *apology*. (*Marg. Ref.*) And whatever may be urged in favour of the word, in this age of *apologies*, it conveys the idea of a cautious defensive war against impiety and infidelity, rather than of that boldness and decision with which the cause of God and truth ought to be supported.

1. 1. 59. xxi. 11
Ec. 15. 3.

23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,

x. vi. 31. 22.
xxii. 10. 27.

24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

1. 1. 59. xxi. 11
Ec. 15. 3.
x. vi. 31. 22.
xxii. 10. 27.

25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

Ec. xxi. 27.

26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.

27 Then the chief captain came, and

said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born.

29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

* Or, *forasmuch*
Am. 34. Heb.
x. 35.
p. 26, 29. xvi. 35.
39.

q. xvi. 11. 32
xxvi. 29. Mat.
xxvii. 2.

r. 5. v. 21. xxi.
15. Mat. x. 17.

V. 22—30. The Jews patiently heard St. Paul's account of his conversion; but his being sent to preach to the Gentiles was so contrary to their bigoted self-preference, their contempt of other nations, and all their religious prejudices, that they would hear no more, so that in the most furious rage they cried out, that such a fellow ought to be dragged away to immediate death, for it was not fit for him to live on the earth, seeing he thus openly preferred uncircumcised idolaters to the covenanted people of God. Amidst these exclamations they pulled off their clothes, either as preparing to stone him to death, if they could get hold of him, or to express their abhorrence of his supposed blasphemy, and they threw dust into the air, as frantic with rage, or that it might fall and cover them, to denote the greatness of their horror at what had been said. This conduct might well astonish the tribune, who could not understand what had wrought them up to such an excess of fury; but, though he concluded that Paul had committed some atrocious crime, he would not give him up to their resentment. Yet, according to the barbarous and irrational practice in use even among the Romans, (as it is in many nations to this day,) he ordered him to be examined by scourging, till the anguish of the stripes inflicted on him should extort from him a confession of his guilt. Whilst the soldiers were binding him with thongs to a pillar, or block, for that purpose, he demanded of the centurion, whom the tribune had charged with this service, whether it were lawful for them thus to scourge a Roman citizen, who had not been condemned for any crime? A Roman might not be punished before he was legally condemned, nor scourged in this manner at all, (which was vastly more severe than the scourging with rods;) and as it was even unlawful to bind him with thongs, though not to put fetters upon him, so the centurion was led, by this question, to caution the tribune to take care what he did; and he came to the apostle to enquire whether he really were a Roman. He had himself purchased this valuable privilege for a great sum of money; and, as Paul was a Jew, apparently in low circumstances, he questioned him how he had acquired it;

but the apostle informed him, that he was free born. He had before mentioned his being a citizen of Tarsus, yet the tribune had not thence inferred that he was entitled to the privilege of a Roman citizen; so that it is probable, that all the citizens of the Roman colonies had not this privilege, or that Tarsus was not a colony. Paul, however, satisfied the tribune that he was a Roman, and so the design of torturing him by scourging, to make him confess some crime which could not be proved, was given up, and the tribune feared lest he should be called to account for having bound him. So that, instead of this method of discovering his guilt, he on the morrow, summoned the council, and brought Paul, freed from his fetters, before them, to be examined. Hence we may infer, that many of the principal persons in the nation had joined with the multitude in their vehement and outrageous zeal against the apostle.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—5.

The honour of the Gospel requires its advocates to speak with temper, benevolence, and respect, to their superiors, as well as with boldness and constancy, in the midst of all the abuse which may be cast upon them.—A simple narration of the Lord's dealings with us, in bringing us, from opposing, to profess and promote his Gospel, when it is delivered with modesty and caution, will sometimes make more impression on men's minds, than laboured arguments or rhetorical declamations. Indeed, the experience and conversion of some individuals have been so remarkable, that the recital of them hath great force of argument in it; though it seldom, if ever, amounts to that complete demonstration of the truth, which the change wrought in the case of the apostle contained in it. Natural abilities, the advantages of education, proficiency in learning, exactness in a system, and a fervent religious zeal according to it, may be either valuable, or mischievous, as they are directed, under the influence of divine grace, in support of the

CHAP. XXIII.

Paul, pleading his integrity, is smitten at the command of the high priest, whom he reproves for his injustice, 1—3. Being censured for it, he excuses the sharpness of his language, 4, 5. Declaring himself a Pharisee, in respect of the resurrection, he causes a division in the council, 6—9. The chief captain, fearing lest he should be torn in pieces, conveys him back to the castle, 10. The Lord encourages him by a vision, 11. Forty Jews conspire to murder him, binding themselves by oath, not to eat or drink till they have done it, 12, 13.

truth, or employed by men's selfish passions in defence of error. Zeal especially is an ambiguous attainment; it may be a violent, cruel, and dreadful flame, kindled from beneath, and destroying all around it with fatal vehemence; or it may be a gentle, active, kind, and heavenly principle, powerfully influencing the possessor to every thing excellent and beneficial, in the persevering use of the most unexceptionable means.

V. 6—21.

Many, who for a time have devoted their talents to the service of delusion and error, have afterwards been induced to consecrate them to the cause of Christ. The Lord having chosen the sinner, "that he should know his will," he is awakened, humbled, illuminated, and brought acquainted with Jesus and his blessed Gospel. Being acknowledged as a brother by those who were disciples before him, he makes profession of his faith, calls upon the Redeemer's name, receives the comfort of being washed from his sins, and testifies to others what he hath heard and learned of the Saviour's glory and grace. Thus he passes from Satan's kingdom to that of Christ, and begins to seek its peace and prosperity, whilst his former associates are surprised, offended, or enraged, at the revolution which hath taken place. When a man is thus admitted among the servants of Christ, he is often employed in such services as disconcert all his own schemes. Not being wholly weaned from "leaning to his own understanding," he is sometimes reluctant to renounce his favourite plan, even after he has been praying for direction respecting the will of God. A person in these circumstances, often imagines that his former friends having known his contempt and enmity against the truth, will pay the more attention to his testimony, and that his former zeal for some form or party, and against such tenets as he deemed enthusiastical and erroneous, will induce them to inquire into the grounds of the change that hath taken place. Perhaps he thinks that their opposition arises mainly from misinformation, and that if the truth were fairly set before them, they could not resist the evidence of it. Thus he may practically forget, that

They avow their purpose to the chief priests, and secure their concurrence, 14, 15. The conspiracy is discovered to Paul and to the chief captain, 16—22; who sends Paul, under a strong guard, and with a letter, to Felix the governor at Cesarea, 23—35.

AND Paul, ^a earnestly beholding the ^b council, said, ^c Men and brethren, ^d I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

2 And the high priest ^e Ananias commanded them that stood by him, ^f to smite him on the mouth.

3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall

nothing can reconcile the heart of fallen man to the Gospel, except the special grace of God; that a prophet is not without honour save in his own country; and that a servant of Christ may expect a more favourable hearing from entire strangers, than from prejudiced neighbours, relatives, and acquaintance; who commonly treat his attempts to convince them as an usurpation of authority, to which he is not entitled.

V. 22—30.

When the servants of Christ in obedience to his express command, turn from those who reject their testimony, and seek for more favourable hearers, they whom they then leave, will sometimes be highly displeased. Bigotry and spiritual pride are commonly connected with furious wrath and intolerant malice. And it is well for mankind, that the power of persecutors is often inadequate to their rage; otherwise they would drive all the servants of Christ out of the earth, as unfit to live upon it. But the Lord mercifully restrains their madness, by subjecting them to more moderate men. For though many iniquities have been practised by magistrates, even in civilized nations, yet their severity is commonly tender mercy, compared with the cruelty of enraged bigots, when advanced to authority: and their haste in punishing is deliberation and caution, compared with the fury of a licentious mob, when excited by frantic persecutors. But how great a privilege is it to be governed according to a *written law*! That if a magistrate is about to act unjustly, it may be demanded of him, whether this be lawful? and suggested to him, to take heed what he doeth, lest he should expose himself to a judicial rebuke. Christians are allowed to avail themselves of these privileges: our birth-right as Britons, (who are far more favoured in Providence than even the Roman citizens were,) is not forfeited by our becoming the subjects of Christ; though we should insist upon our privileges with great modesty, prudence, and quietness. But we should most of all value that freedom, to which all the children of God are born, and which no sum of money, however large, can purchase for such as remain unregenerate.

¹ Matt xxiii 27.
28.
29. ² Lev xix. 15. Ps
lvi 1. 2.
1xxxvii. 1.
30. ³ Num 30. Ex. 1.
15. Am. v 7.
Mic. iii 8-11.
4. ⁴ Deut xxv 1, 2.
John vii 51.
xxiii 24.

smite thee, *thou* whited wall: ^a for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be ^b smitten contrary to the law?

4 And they that stood by, said, Revilest thou God's high priest?

5 Then said ¹ Paul, ¹ I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, ² Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

6 But when ¹ Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, ² I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: ³ of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

7 And when he had so said, ^a there arose a dissension between the Pharisees

and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

8 For the ^a Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both.

9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes *that were* of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, ^a We find no evil in this man: but ² if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, ³ let us not fight against God.

10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, ^a fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, ^a and to take him by force from among them, and to bring *him* into the castle.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII. V. 1—5. When the apostle was placed before the Sanhedrim, he steadfastly viewed it, to observe of what persons it now consisted, and as confidently looking at those, who formerly employed him in persecuting the Christians: and he then solemnly protested, that he had “to that day lived,” (or acted as a member of the community,) “in all good conscience towards God.” The rulers, priests, and people, were ready to condemn him as a most atrocious criminal, for embracing the Gospel and preaching it to the Gentiles; but he declared, that in these things he had not acted from sinister motives, but out of a conscientious regard to his duty in the sight of God, in which he had persevered amidst many trials to that very time. He had indeed acted according to his conscience, when he persecuted the Christians; but this was the result of pride, ignorance, inattention, and obstinate self-will; and it can hardly be supposed that he would call this “a good conscience before God.” But the council would have given him credit for that part of his life: his object therefore evidently was, to show that he had acted conscientiously and on good grounds, in those things which they deemed deserving of death; and he doubtless meant more fully to have explained his reasons and motives, if the council would have heard them. But the high-priest, being a leading person in this prosecution, and aware that Paul's protestation of innocence implied a charge of malice and injustice against his virulent enemies, ordered him to be smitten on the mouth, for pleading not guilty, when they were determined to condemn him! This was oppressive, iniquitous, and illegal in the extreme: and the apostle immediately denounced the judgment of God upon him for it, and for his other crimes; and declared him to be “a whited wall,” or a hypocrite, who might be compared to a mud wall, whited over and made to have a fair outside. This appeared, in that he sat in the council to judge him according to the law of God, yet, instead of inquiring into the merits of his cause, he had ordered him to be smitten before he was

proved guilty of any fault, or even impropriety, in his behaviour. (*Marg. Ref.*) ‘Ananias carried it very ^a plausibly towards the citizens, and stood high in their ^a favour; yet he impiously and cruelly defrauded the ^a inferior priests of their legal subsistence, so that some ^a of them even perished for want. And God did remarkably smite him; for after his own house had been ^a reduced to ashes in a tumult begun by his own son, he ^a was besieged and taken in the royal palace, where, ^a having in vain attempted to hide himself in an old ^a aqueduct, he was dragged out and slain.’ (*Doddridge.*) But though the answer of Paul contained a just rebuke, and an evident prediction, yet in uttering them he seems to have been too much carried away by indignation at the base usage which he had experienced; being therefore censured for reviling God's high-priest, he answered he was not aware that Ananias was the high-priest. It seems unreasonable to suppose, that the apostle would, in such circumstances, question his title to his office, or refer to the High-Priesthood of Christ as superseding it; though the Scripture referred to seems rather to point out Ananias's office as a supreme magistrate, than his sacred function. (*Note, Ex. xxii. 28.*) It is however probable, that the apostle meant to allow, that in the warmth of his spirit he had not adverted to the person who had given the orders, or was not aware that he was the high-priest. Perhaps the high-priest in the Sanhedrim was not always to be known by his seat or his garments, and Ananias did not fill that office, when Paul had been more conversant with that assembly. But it is not very clear, whether the apostle intended by this concession to waive the question, concerning his speaking by the Spirit of prophecy, as not choosing to insist on it, or whether he allowed that he had spoken too sharply, and could not justify the whole of his answer, or propose it to the imitation of others. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 6—10. The apostle personally knew many members of the Sanhedrim, and he was sensible that there were two parties among them of opposite principles, and

x li. 25. xviii. 9.
xviii. 23, 24. Ps.
xvi. 1, 2. cix.
1. li. xli. 10.
14. xliii. 2. Jer.
xv. 19-21. Mat.
xv. 20. John.
xiv. 10. 2 Cor. i.
9-10.

9. xxi. 22, 25.
Mat. ix. 9. xiv.
27. John xvi. 33.
xix. 21. xx. 22.
18. xviii.
23-28. Rom. i.
15, 16. Phil. i.
13. 2 Tim. iv. 7.
6. xlii. 10. Jer. xl.
19. Matt. xxvi. 4.
25. Mark vi. 23-26.
28. vii. 1. 15. Neh. x.
29. Matt. xxvi. 74. Gr.
1 Cor. xvi. 22. Gal. iii.
13. —d 1 Sam.
xv. 24. 28. 40-44.

11 And the night following ^x the Lord stood by him, and said, ^y Be of good cheer, Paul; ^z for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so ^a must thou bear witness also at Rome.

12 ¶ And when it was day, ^c certain of the Jews banded together, ^e and bound themselves ^d under a curse, saying, ^d That

13 And they were more than forty ^e which had made this conspiracy.

14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.

15 Now, therefore, ye with the council signify to the chief captain, ^e that he

they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

13 And they were more than forty ^e which had made this conspiracy.

14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.

15 Now, therefore, ye with the council signify to the chief captain, ^e that he

c 2 Sam. xv. 12.
31. John xvi. 2.
1. 10. 1. 11, 12.
vii. 2. Hos. iv.
9. Mic. vii. 3.

xxvi. 3. Ps.
xxviii. 32, 33.
1. 10. 1. 11, 12.
10. iv. 16. 14.
10. 7. Rom. iii.
14-16.

very vehement in their contests with each other; though they were now agreed in persecuting him. As therefore they would pay no impartial attention to reason, or facts, however authenticated, he attempted to divert their violence from himself upon each other. Accordingly he cried aloud, that he was the son of a Pharisee, had been educated in the opinions of that sect, and still maintained the principal doctrines which were controverted between them and the Sadducees: nay, that indeed he was called in question at that time for professing the hope, and bearing testimony to the reality, of the resurrection of the dead. The principal fact which he attested, as the apostle of Christ, was his resurrection from the dead to be the first-fruits of his people; and all the doctrines of the Gospel were intimately connected with that fundamental principle. The first persecution of the Church resulted from the testimony of the apostles to the resurrection of their crucified Lord; the Sadducees took the lead in it, because "they preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead;" and the enmity of many in the council against Paul, at this time, was increased by their consciousness, that his doctrine was wholly subversive of their favourite scheme: so that, in every way, he was called to account for preaching Jesus as risen, and the hope and doctrine of a future resurrection. This was therefore an evident truth: he was not obliged to bring forward all the doctrines which he professed, when not interrogated about them; and it seems to have been entirely justifiable in him, by this seasonable profession, to draw off the Pharisees from the side of his persecutors, and to induce them to afford him some protection amidst all this illegal violence. At the same time he showed a most consummate sagacity, and a deep acquaintance with the human heart, and of that universal disposition, which continually manifests itself, of favouring those, who take our part in any contested point. 'Grant me discernment, I allow it you.' (*Comperr.*) Accordingly this declaration was so pleasing to the Pharisees, that their rage was for a time disarmed; and the Sadducees being proportionably exasperated, the two parties began eagerly to dispute about the resurrection of the dead, the existence of angels and of separate spirits; the one contending for, and the other arguing against, these doctrines, with the greatest violence. At length those scribes, who espoused the part of the Pharisees, (being sharpened against their antagonists, and perceiving that the apostle's doctrine and narrative tended to establish their tenets, and to destroy those of the Sadducees,) declared that they could not find him guilty of any crime: and though they did not believe what he said concerning Jesus of Nazareth, yet,

if an angel, or the spirit of some deceased person, had spoken to him, (as doubtless often had been done,) it did not become them to fight against God, by punishing him. There is a great similarity between this speech and the counsel which Gamaliel had formerly given; and perhaps there was a reference to it, though he seems to have died before this time. The contest, however, now became so fierce between the parties, that Lysias began to apprehend they would tear Paul in pieces in their fury; and therefore he ordered him to be taken from them, and conveyed into the castle. What must this heathen have thought of the worshippers of God, when he saw this assembly of priests, scribes, and rulers of Israel, forgetful of what became their rank, profession, and sacred character; and carried away by such unbridled rage in their religious contests, as the Romans would have been ashamed of, even in their competition for authority and preferences?

V. 11. The apostle had been repeatedly delivered from the most imminent danger: but he was now confined in prison; and the desperate malice of his numerous enemies would leave nothing unattempted, in order to take away his life. He might therefore perhaps be under some discouragement in respect of his situation; but his gracious Lord was pleased personally to appear before him, assuring him that he accepted of his testimony concerning him in Jerusalem; and that his desire of attesting his truth at Rome also would certainly be granted. This ensured his protection against all his enemies, who might fight with him, but could not prevail against him. (*Marg. Rv.*) —'Here is an instance of a divine appointment, without any necessity laid on the will of Paul.' (*Whitby.*) As if those, whom this learned writer would contend with, held that the divine decrees laid any necessity on the human will? In fact the instance proves, beyond all controversy, that an event may be certainly determined by almighty God, and infallibly come to pass, though all parties concerned exercise the utmost free-agency, of which the rational nature is capable. Some argue from this vision, that the Lord approved of the apostle's conduct: but though this is undoubtedly true, as to the grand outline, yet the vision no more proves that the conduct of the apostle was free from all mixture of infirmity, than the vision, with which Jacob was favoured at Bethel, proves that he had not sinned in fraudulently obtaining the blessing. The actions of men must be judged of by the law of God, and not by the event, or by any special instances of the Lord's unmerited kindness to them.

bring him down unto you to-morrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

16 And ^b when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.

17 Then Paul called ^c one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.

18 So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, ^d Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath ^e something to say unto thee.

19 Then the chief captain ^f took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, ^g What is that thou hast to tell me?

20 And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee, that thou wouldest bring

down Paul to-morrow into the council, ^h as though they would inquire somewhat of him more perfectly.

21 But do not thou yield unto them: ⁱ for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with ^j an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.

22 So the chief captain ^k then let the young man depart, and charged him, ^l See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me.

23 And he called unto him ^m two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Cesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, ⁿ at the third hour of the night;

24 And provide them ^o beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto ^p Felix ^q the governor.

H. John. 13 Prov.
xvi. 30. 1 Cor.
xiii. 12.

127. xxi. 26.
Nest. vi. 6. 3.

K. xvi. 25. xxi. 26.
L. xxi. 26.
G. x. 14. 15.
E. x. 14. 15.
1. Paul. 9.

1. Luke vii. 40.

m Jer. xxxi. 32.
Mark vii. 25.
18. 27.

a Neh. ii. 4. Esth.
v. 3. 12. 13.
12. Mark. 8. 31.

o 15. Ps. xli. 2.
Dan. vi. 6-12.

p 12-14. ix. 23.
24. xiv. 5. 6. xx.
19. xiv. 3. 2.
Cor. xi. 26. 32.
33.
q 14. Rom. ix. 8.

r Josh. ii. 14.
Mark i. 34.

s 17.

t Matt. xiv. 26.
Luke xii. 38.
u Neh. ii. 12.
Esth. vii. 16.

x Luke x. 31.
x 26. 33-35. xxi.
3. 10. 22-27.

xxv. 14.
y Matt. xxvii. 2.
Luke iii. 1.

V. 12-22. The Jews perceiving that Lysias was resolved to protect Paul, unless legally convicted of some crime, began to fear that their malice would be disappointed. Therefore forty of the most zealous of them, (probably not members of the council, nor yet persons of the lowest order,) supposing that they should do God service by murdering his minister, conspired together, engaging by a solemn oath, and an anathema or imprecation of divine vengeance on themselves, if they tasted either meat or drink till they had slain Paul. Nay, so far from being ashamed of this most atrocious design of assassination, they gloried in it as highly meritorious: and knowing that many of the priests and elders of the council would favour the design; (for the Sadducees seem to have been the more numerous in that assembly;) they informed them of their whole plan, and assigned them the part which they should perform in order to accomplish it; whilst the guilt or odium of the measure, if there were any, would rest wholly on the conspirators. By what means Paul's nephew discovered this diabolical design, is not known; but as so many persons were privy to it, and as the conspirators only wished to conceal it from Lysias, till it were executed, they might not all be very cautious in speaking of it. Providence, however, took this method of detecting and disappointing it. Paul, though assured of protection, deemed it his duty to use every proper means for his own safety: and the conduct of Lysias towards the young man showed much affability, good sense, generosity, and regard to truth and equity, which in a heathen formed a striking contrast to the insidious, violent, cruel, and iniquitous conduct of the Jewish priests and rulers, who were evidently ripe for vengeance. 'Such execrable vows were not unusual among the Jews, who challenged to themselves a right of punishing those, without any legal process, whom they considered as transgressors of the

law: and in some cases thought that they were justified in killing them. It is no wonder, therefore, that these Jews should make no scruple of acquainting the chief priests and elders with their conspiracy against the life of Paul; who were so far from blaming them for it, that not long after they renewed the same design themselves. (xxv. 2, 3.) Dr. Lightfoot has shown from the Talmud, that if they were prevented from accomplishing such vows as these, it was an easy matter to obtain absolution from the Rabbies.' (Doddridge.) The Rabbies, however, could not deliver them from the curse of God, which they had imprecated on themselves; though they gave them leave to eat and drink, notwithstanding their vow.

V. 23, 24. The desperate measures of the Jews, no doubt, confirmed Lysias in his determination to protect his prisoner; but by keeping him at Jerusalem, insurrections might have been excited, and some opportunity might have been afforded to his vigilant enemies of murdering him. He therefore resolved to send him to Felix, the Roman governor, who resided at Cesarea, which is computed to have been about seventy miles from Jerusalem.

The body of Roman soldiers, appointed to escort him, consisting of two hundred legionary soldiers, two hundred light-armed foot-soldiers, and seventy horsemen, would have sufficed to repel any tumultuary assault of the Jews: but, to prevent blood-shed, they were ordered to set off about three hours after sun-set, that they might be out of the reach of the zealots before morning. This prudent precaution was accompanied by one equally humane: Paul was not required to walk with the soldiers, who had been accustomed to long and speedy marches; but they were ordered to provide beasts, mules, or horses, changing them when necessary, that he might be conducted safely and conveniently to Cesarea.

25 And he wrote a letter after this manner:

26 Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting.

27 This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.

28 And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council:

29 Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.

30 And when it was told me, how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave com-

mandment to his accusers also, to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell.

31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris.

32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle;

33 Who, when they came to Cesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.

34 And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia;

35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment-hall.

V. 27—30. This epistle, which is a good specimen of the Roman method of writing letters, may be considered as a model of brevity, simplicity, and perspicuity. The customary title of respect to a superior, and expression of good-will, are *once only* made use of: and in this it differs exceedingly from modern epistles to persons of high rank and authority, which are generally encumbered with multiplied compliments and ascriptions of honour. Lysias, however, was careful not to intimate to Felix, that he had bound Paul in order to scourge him: and as we suppose this to have been an exact copy of the letter, it appears, that he was willing Felix should conclude, that his interposition in Paul's favour arose from a previous knowledge that he was a Roman citizen. In other respects the account was fair and candid; and we cannot wonder that a heathen should state his conduct in that light, which was most favourable to his own reputation and advancement.

V. 32, 33. Antipatris is supposed to have been about half-way between Jerusalem and Cesarea: and, as it was not probable that the Jews would follow Paul to so great a distance in any formidable body, the seventy horsemen were thought a sufficient guard, and the foot-soldiers were sent back.

V. 35. *Herod's, &c.* This was not the common jail, but part of a palace built by Herod the Great; who had re-built Cesarea, which was before called Straton's tower; and had given it a new name in honour of the Roman emperor, by whose favour he obtained the kingdom. Paul was lodged in this place, as more favoured than prisoners in general were.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—5.

To rejoice in the testimony of a good conscience before God, amidst calumnies and persecutions, is an invaluable blessing; but this cannot be habitually possessed, except

by the constant exercise of faith in Christ, and an upright obedience to his commandments. No rank, learning, authority, religious profession, or sacred function, can change the pride and selfishness of the human heart; but iniquity and oppression are most hateful, when committed in courts of justice, and masked with pretensions to piety. The actors in such atrocious hypocrisy are whitel walls and painted sepulchres, whom God will smite with distinguished vengeance. The best of men are liable, when greatly abused, to be put off their guard; and even that zeal and faithfulness which the Holy Spirit dictates, in warning signers of approaching ruin, will sometimes be mingled with the remains of our sinful passions, and prompt us to speak unadvisedly with our lips. But whether in reality, or only in appearance, we speak or act inconsistently with God's precepts, it is in general advisable to decline a strenuous justification of ourselves, and to admit that our conduct was in some respects unfit for imitation: and in ordinary circumstances, we should by no means speak evil of our rulers, whatever their characters may be, or however they may have injured us; for the Christian's maxim is, "overcome evil with good."

V. 6—11.

The wisdom of the serpent, as well as the harmlessness of the dove, is necessary for us, amidst unreasonable and wicked men. It is useless to urge the most conclusive arguments, when we know that our cause is already prejudged: and it is lawful on some occasions to seek the protection of one party against the violence of another, by declaring that we hold with them in many important doctrines, if this can be said consistent with exact truth. Thus we may sometimes divert the storm which we could not repress, and divide the counsels of the enemies of the Gospel. Among those who oppose spiritual religion, some come nearer to the truth than others; and though self-righteous Pharisees are to be warned and shunned, yet

CHAP. XXIV.

The high priest and elders go to Cesarea, and by Tertullus accuse Paul before Felix, 1—9. Paul makes his defence, refutes the charge brought against him, and gives an account of his own conduct, 10—21. Felix defers the matter, and shows favour to Paul, 22, 23. Paul reasons before Felix and Drusilla, his wife, concerning righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come; till Felix trembles, and postpones the subject to a convenient opportunity, 24, 25. He hopes in vain for a bribe to release Paul; and at length, being superseded in his government, leaves him in prison to please the Jews, 26, 27.

AND after ^a five days, ^b Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain ^c orator named Tertullus, who ^d informed the governor against Paul.

2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, ^e Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence,

3 We accept ^f it always, and in all places, ^g most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.

4 Notwithstanding, ^h that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee, that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words.

5 For ⁱ we have found this man a pestilent fellow, ^j and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ring-leader of ^k the sect of the ^l Nazarenes:

6 Who also hath ^m gone about to profane the temple; ⁿ whom we took, ^o and would have judged according to our law:

7 But ^p the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with ^q great violence took him away out of our hands,

21. xxv. 27.
xxvi. 2. 30. 35.
xxv. 2.

xxvi. 21. Is. liii. 3.
1 Cor. ii. 1. 4.
xxv. 2. 15.

e 26. 27. Ps. x. 3.
xii. 2. 3. Prov.
xxv. 28. xxiii.
6. Jude 16.

f xxiii. 26. Gr.
xxvi. 25. Luke

g Heb. xi. 32.
h vi. 13. xvi. 20.
i 21. xvi. 6, 7.
j xxi. 20. xxi. 22.
xxviii. 12. 1
Kings xviii. 17.
18. Jer. xxxviii.
4. Am. vii. 10.
Matt. v. 11, 12.
x. 25. 1 Cor. iv.
13.

k 1 Sam. xxii. 7—
9. Ezra iv. 12—
19. Neh. vi. 5—9.
Ezra. iii. 8. Luke
xxvi. 2. 5. 19. 23.
1 Pet. ii. 12—15.
k 14. Gr. v. 17.
xv. 5. xxvi. 5.
xxviii. 22. 1 Cor.
xi. 19. 27.

l Matt. ii. 23.
m 12. xxi. 27—29.
n xxi. 30—32.
xxii. 29. xxiii.
10—15.
o John xviii. 31.
xix. 7. 8.
p xxvi. 31—33.
xxiii. 23—32.
Prov. iv. 16.
q xxi. 35. xxiii. 10.

Sadducees, who deny all the doctrines of revealed religion, should be still more strenuously opposed. In every controversy, especially relating to religion, an appeal to men's passions and prejudices, and an avowed preference of their tenets to those of their opponents, will generally go further than either sound arguments or exemplary conduct, in softening their resentment and securing their esteem. Allow them to have truth on their side, and they will be disposed to grant you the same; for man is a vain-glorious creature, who courts flattery, and would have his own opinion considered as the standard of truth. An attention to this characteristic of our fallen nature seems the grand device for managing mankind; whether among the giddy multitude, in the great councils of nations, or in ecclesiastical conventions. But it is a delicate operation, that requires great skill and caution; and there is great danger of deviating from strict simplicity and godly sincerity into carnal policy, if we have much recourse to it: though we may avail ourselves of it on some great emergency, and when it may evidently be done without receding from our principles, and to the advantage of the truth. But what a scandal is it, when the professors and ministers of religion are so furious in their contests, that ungodly men cry shame of their violence, and are constrained to interpose authority or military force to quell the riot, and prevent more fatal consequences! Or when national and ecclesiastical assemblies more resemble a meeting of furious assassins, than a convention of legislators, or of the servants of God! Yet this hath too often been the case; and the fury of controversy is not yet extinct. But the Lord Jesus will be the comfort and refuge of his faithful servants, amidst all dangers and troubles, until their testimony and work be finished: and did their enemies know how sweet their secret consolations are, they would

be less surprised at their fortitude and patience in public.

V. 12—35.

The corruption of the best things becomes the worst: false religious principles, zealously espoused by carnal men, will dictate such enormities, as others seem scarcely capable of; and thus the most horrid villanies have been perpetrated, not only without remorse, but with exultation. How careful should we be not to vow what is criminal, or may be impracticable; and not to trifle with oaths and imprecations! Thus men are drawn into wickedness, and expose themselves to vengeance, which way soever they turn themselves: nor will evasions, or dispensations, extricate them from the snare. All that in this case can be done is, to repent, and seek forgiveness of so great a wickedness. The Lord readily disappoints the best concerted schemes of iniquity, and detects the most secret devices of his enemies. He has instruments for every work: the natural abilities and moral virtues of heathens have often been employed in the protection of his persecuted servants; and they can discern between the unaffected conscientiousness of upright believers, and the zeal of false professors, though they disregard or do not understand their doctrinal principles. Nothing *spiritually* good can indeed be found in our fallen nature, except as the fruit of renewing grace: yet a regard to truth, equity, and humanity in social life, is often met with in those who know not God; and indeed is seldom totally overcome, except by false principles, or long habits of vice. This helps to keep the world in order, and by means of it the Lord fulfils his word to his persecuted people: for all hearts are in his hand, and they are blessed who put their trust in him.

r xxiii. 30. 35.
xxv. 5. 15. 16.
e 19-21.

8 * Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: * by examining of whom, thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things whereof we accuse him.

c vi 11-13. Pa
iv. 2. Icd 3.4.
Isiv 2-3. Is
Isa. 4-7. Jer
Is. 3-6. Ez
xxiii. 27-29.
Mic. vi. 12. 13
vii. 2, 3. Matt.
xxvi. 59, 60
John vii. 44.
viii. 17. xiii. 16
xiii. 33. xxi. 40
xxvi. 1.
xxvii. 1. (Isam
ii. 25) Luke xii
14. xxviii. 2.

9 And the Jews also assented, saying, That these things were so.

10 Then Paul, after that the governor * had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years * a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself:

11 Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet * but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for * to worship.

a 5. xxv. 8.
xxviii. 17.
b xiv 7.
c Ps cxi. 46.
Matt x 32.
d ix 2. xix. 9
22. Am viii. 14
2 Pet. ii. 2.
e See on, sect. 5.
1 Cor. xi. 19.
Gal. v. 20. Tit
iii. 10. 2 Pet. i.
f iii. 13. v. 30
vii. 32. xii. 14.
d E. iii. 15.
1 Chr. xxi. 18.
2 Tim. i. 3.

12 And they * neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:

13 Neither * can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.

14 But this * I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call * heresy, so worship I * the God of my fathers,

* believing all things which are written * in the law and the prophets:

15 And I have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, * that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

16 And I herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

17 Now, after many years, I came * to bring alms to my nation, * and offerings.

18 Whereupon * certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult:

19 Who * ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had aught against me.

20 Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil-doing in me, while I stood before the council,

21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, * Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV. V. 1-9. The high-priest and elders considered the prosecution of Paul as so important a matter, or rather were in such a rage with him and Lysias, that they lost no time in following him to Cesarea: so that they arrived there five days after Paul left Jerusalem. Some think that it was but five days from the time of his being apprehended; and consequently they suppose that more days were spent in his purification; but this is not likely. (Note, xxi. 27.) In order to render their cause more specious before the governor, they retained a noted orator as their counsel: but dissimulation and falsehood are more prominent in his speech, than oratorical abilities. He, however, understood the art of flattery, and lavished high encomiums on Felix, who was a very bad character. He panegyrised him, as the author of peace and prosperity to the nation; and as if they had been deeply indebted to his wise foresight, and beneficent plans and prudent administration; * and this in language which at least implied such a profane disregard to divine Providence, as was not customary in the public discourses of the most eminent persons among idolaters. (Doddridge.) Yet we read of no benefit whatever resulting from Felix's oppressive government, except that he freed the country from some daring gangs of robbers. * All historians agree, that he was a man of so bad a character, that his government was a plague to all the provinces over which he presided: and as to Judea, its state under Felix was so far from being what Tertullus here represents, that Josephus, (besides what he says of the barbarous and cowardly assassination of Jonathan the high-priest by his means,) declares that the Jews accused

* him before Nero of insufferable oppressions; and would * certainly have ruined him, if his brother Pallas had not interposed in his favour. (Doddridge.) Tertullus, however, intimated, that he would have enlarged still more in encomiums on Felix, had he not feared being tedious to him; and therefore he entreated him, according to his known clemency, to hear him speak a few words concerning the prisoner. For they had found him to be a pestilence, a man who infected every one with his pernicious principles, and so became a public nuisance. He had excited the Jews to sedition all over the world; being a ringleader of a most dangerous sect, who professed allegiance to Jesus of Nazareth, and who could not therefore be supposed loyal subjects to the Roman emperor. But, waiving other particulars, he had just before ventured to profane the temple by bringing Gentiles into it: and when, according to the allowance of the Roman authority, they had apprehended him, and were about to proceed against him in a legal manner, Lysias had interposed with a military force, taken the matter out of their hands, and required his accusers to come thither; by whose testimony Felix might be certified of the truth of all these allegations. Though almost every sentence in this speech contained a palpable falsehood, yet the abandoned high-priest and elders hesitated not to attest the truth of it! The high-priest, the chief magistrate of the Jews, was known to be one of Paul's accusers; yet the tribune, a subordinate officer under the Roman governor, commanded these accusers to go to Cesarea. This shows to what entire subjection the Jews were at this time reduced. And was not * the sceptre departed from Judah? (Note, Gen. xlix. 10.) V. 10-21. * Tertullus, by a diabolical hypocrisy,

xxv. 22. Mark
v. 20. Luke
xix. 3. xxiv. 8.
y xvi. 3. xx. 21.
Gal. ii. 16. 20
iii. 2. 1 John v.
1. Jude 3. Rev
x. 12
z xvi. 2. 1 Sam.
xv. 7. Is. i. 18.
xli. 21. Rom
xli. 1. 1 Pet. iii.

xlii 21 Rom
xlii 1. 1 Pet. iii.
15
a 15 26. 2 Sam
xlii 3. Job
xlii 1. Ps. xlii

a 15 26. 2 Sam
 xxi 3. Job
 xxi 11. Ps xl
 i 21 xvi 5 lxi.
 24 vi 12 i John
 x. 1-1 20 Hos.
 12 xvi 31 Ec iii.
 v 5 2 Cor. v 10.
 14-15. —ii ii. 37.
 18 20 I. lavi. 2
 v 12 xii 21 Jam.
 —21 xxxviii. 14—
 Luke xiii. 24, 25.

V. 22, 23. The defence of Paul was simple and convincing, and the charges brought against him by Tertullus had been clearly refuted; and, probably, Felix perceived that the prosecution was merely a party-matter. Having also more acquaintance with the reports which had been dispersed, concerning Jesus and his doctrine, than Lysias had, he was more aware of the motives and intentions of the Jews: he therefore deferred the further hearing of the cause, till Lysias came down. He would not gratify the Jewish rulers by condemning a Roman citizen, or delivering him up to their malice; neither would he affront them by releasing him. He, however, allowed him more liberty than he had before; and by his permission the Christians of Cesarea and others might have access to him, which would be comfortable to him, and profitable to them. 'It seems to me evident, that these words,' (22.) 'cannot admit the explication of Grotius and others, that Felix deferred them, *that he might have a more exact knowledge of Christianity*; but that having his residence at Cesarea, where Cornelius the centurion and his friends were converted, where Philip the evangelist dwelt, and where there were many disciples, he became thus acquainted with the way of Christianity.' (Whitby.)

26 He ^c hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: ^k wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.

27 But after ^l two years ^k Porcius Festus came into Felix's room: and Felix, ^l willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

xviii. 20.
xix. 1. xxi.
24. 25. 32.
1. xii. 3. xiv. 9.
14. Ex. xlii. 25.
Prov. xxii. 25.
Mark. xv. 15.
Luke. xxi. 24.
25. Gal. i. 10.

V. 24—27. Felix seems to have been absent for a time from Caesarea, and on his return he brought Drusilla with him. She was daughter to that Herod who beheaded James the brother of John, and sister to king Agrippa, who is afterwards mentioned: she was married to Azizus, king of the Emesenes, who had been circumcised in order to obtain her: but she had left her husband, to cohabit with Felix, being a very profligate woman. Felix had heard many things concerning Jesus and the Christian religion; but he was curious to learn a more authentic and complete account of these matters from Paul; as Drusilla also seems to have been. The apostle was therefore sent for, that he might speak before the governor concerning the faith in Christ. What he said of his Person, miracles, life, death, resurrection, salvation, and kingdom, we know not: but in order to show his *noble* auditors the tendency of the Gospel, and its importance to *them*, as well as to others, he reasoned about the nature and obligations of justice, equity, sobriety, temperance, and a proper government of the appetites and passions; and concerning a future judgment, when every man, without distinction, must give an account of himself to God; and if found guilty, be punished for his crimes in a most tremendous manner. This was a most suitable, bold, and faithful address of the prisoner to this powerful, oppressive, iniquitous, and adulterous judge, and his licentious paramour; and a proper method of showing them their need of the repentance, forgiveness, and grace of the Gospel. Whilst the licentious Jewess seems to have remained obdurate, Felix was so convicted in his own conscience, that he trembled before his prisoner, from dread of the wrath to come; but, instead of inquiring "what he must do to be saved," he abruptly ended the conference, intimating that he was too much engaged at that time to consider the subject any further; but that, when he had leisure, he would again send for Paul, and hear his doctrine. Thus his terrors and convictions soon subsided; his avarice and other corrupt passions retained their full dominion; and knowing that the Christians were eminently liberal, by general report, as well by what he had heard of the alms and oblations sent by the apostle to Jerusalem, he hoped that they would buy his liberty with a considerable sum of money. He therefore kept him in prison, and frequently sent for him, and talked with him, but not concerning the faith of Christ: and at length, when succeeded by another governor, he left the apostle bound, in order to please the Jews by an act of injustice, and so prevent them from accusing him before the emperor. But in this he was disappointed: for they accused him of extortion and oppression, and he narrowly escaped punishment on that account. Neither the apostle nor his friends would concur in Felix's bribery and extortion, even to purchase his liberty: they would not "do evil, that good might come." During the two years of Paul's imprisonment here, those contentions arose between the Jews and Gentiles, as to their respective rights in Caesarea, which, after

many tumults and slaughters of the Jews, did a great deal towards exasperating the nation to that war, which ended in its utter ruin. Drusilla was afterwards consumed, with the son she had by Felix, in a terrible eruption of mount Vesuvius.' (Doddridge.) 'It is no wonder that Felix trembled; and that Drusilla did not so also, was an argument of her Jewish confidence, that she might then' (in the day of judgment,) 'escape by being a daughter of Abraham.' (Whitby.) The conduct of the trembling jailer at Philippi and that of Felix should be carefully and minutely compared; for the contrast is in every particular striking and instructive.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—21.

The selfish and malignant passions of mankind are too commonly the spring of that prompt and persevering activity which they manifest: and the graces of language and elocution have often been tarnished by falsehood and flattery, and employed rather to mislead, and prejudice men against the truth, than to influence them to favour and embrace it. The persecutors of God's people have commonly been the panegyrists of his open enemies; and deviations from truth by complimentary addresses inure the mind to dissimulation, and thus prepare men for slander and false testimony. In what a different light will the characters of Paul and Felix appear at the day of judgment, from what they do in Tertullus's harangue! Let us not then value the applause, nor be troubled at the revilings, of ungodly men; as the vilest of the human race have been almost deified by encomiums, and the excellent of the earth have been treated as pestilences, as movers of sedition, and deserving of universal execration; and this by professors of religion, by priests, elders, and persons of chief authority in the visible Church! But the servants of God must not attempt by flattery to conciliate the favour of those, who seem to have the most power over them; nor should they retort on their accusers, further than is necessary for the refutation of their slanders. They should also be ready to confess their faith, when called upon, and the foundation of their hope, though they be deemed heretical by their enemies; and take occasion to show the agreement of their principles with the word of God, and with the doctrines professed in his Church: especially to call men's reflection to the resurrection of the dead, and the future season of righteous retribution. But they have never rightly understood the doctrines of St. Paul, and are not proper persons to plead for them, who do not "excise themselves to have a conscience void of offence towards God and man." In a continual application of the blood of Jesus, and an habitual dependence on his grace, we should seek daily to have our conduct and temper more and more conformed to his holy precepts, as the rule of our duty. Thus our actions will recommend our principles: our kindness even to those who injure us will ex-

CHAP. XXV.

The Jews accuse Paul to Festus, first at Jerusalem, and then at Cesarea, 1—7. He answers for himself, and appeals to Cesar, 8—11. His appeal is admitted, 12. Festus, being visited by king Agrippa, opens the matter to him, who desires to hear Paul, 13—22. Paul is brought forth before a splendid company; and Festus states his case to them, 23—27.

NOW when Festus was come ^a into the province, after three days ^b he ascended from Cesarea to Jerusalem.

2 Then ^c the high priest, and the chief of the Jews, informed him against Paul, and besought him,

3 And ^d desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, ^e laying wait in the way to kill him.

4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Cesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly *thither*.

5 Let ^f them, therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, ^g if there be any wickedness in him.

6 And when he had tarried among them ^h more than ten days, he went down unto Cesarea; and the next day, ⁱ sitting in the judgment-seat, commanded Paul to be brought.

7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, ^j and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove:

8 While he answered for himself, ^k Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cesar, have I offended any thing at all.

9 But Festus, ^l willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?

^a xxiii. 24.
^b xxi. 22. xxi. 15.

^c 15 xxiv. 1. Job
xxxi. 31. Prov.
iv. 16. Rom. iii.
12—19
^d 1 Sam. xxiii.
19—21 Jer.
xxxix. 4. Mark
vi. 24—25. Luke
xxiii. 8—24.
^e xxiii. 12—15
xxvi. 9—11 Ps.
xxviii. 32, 33.
Lxxv. 2—6. cxi.
1—5 Jer. xxvii.
18 John xvi. 3
Rom. iii. 8.

^f 16. xxiii. 30
xxiv. 6.
^g 18, 19, 25. xxviii.
11, 12. Ps. vii.
3—5 John xviii.
28, 30.

^h Or. as some
copies read, *no
more than eight
forty days*.
ⁱ b. 10. 17. xxviii. 12
—17. Mat. xxviii.
18 John xiii. 13
2 Cor. v. 10
Jam. ii. 6.

^j 124. xxi. 28
xxiv. 6. Ps.
Ezra. vi. 15.
Esth. iii. 8. Pa.
xxviii. 12. xxviii.
11. Mat. v. 11.
12. xxvi. 10—62
Mark xv. 3, 4.
Luke xxiii. 13.
10. 1 Pet. iv. 14.
—16.
^k b. 10. vi. 13, 14.
15. 1 xxviii. 6.
12. 17—21.
xxviii. 21. Gen.
xi. 15. Jer.
xxviii. 18. Dan.
vi. 22. 2 Cor. i.
12.
^l 15. 20. xli. 3.
xxiv. 27. Mark
xv. 15.

pose the malignity of our accusers; and a sober, righteous, and godly life will be the most effectual refutation of all their calumnies.

V. 22—27.



They who are openly irreligious, and even immoral, will often show more favour to zealous believers, than hypocritical bigots do: yet their selfish designs will commonly prevent them from doing impartial justice. Many curiously inquire after the faith in Christ, who are utterly averse to its holy tendency. We should not therefore amuse such inquirers with mere speculative tenets; but “reason with them concerning righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come.” And we ought to level the word of God against the peculiar vices of their conduct, without fear of their displeasure, how powerful soever they may be. This alone can make them sensible of their need of faith in Christ, and prepare them to understand the doctrines of the Gospel; and such opportunities ought not to be lost. So great is the power of divine truth, that it can overawe the consciences of the most potent and profligate, and can make a prince tremble before his prisoner. How then will the wicked be able to stand before the judgment-seat of God? But many, when thus affected, will hear no more; they will in effect say to the minister or book that alarms them, and to their own consciences, “Go thy way at this time;” they will pretend business, engagements, and impediments, at present; and they hope to be soon more favourably circumstanced, or better disposed; and then they will attend to the concerns of their souls. Thus, through procrastination, the hopeful impression wears off; iniquity retains its dominion in their hearts; the convenient time never arrives; they continue to sin on to the end against their better knowledge; and the faithfulness of

their reprovers serves only to aggravate their future condemnation. Hence also it is that wicked professors of religion are the most hardened of all sinners; because they have so often done this violence to their consciences, that they at length become totally callous. *To-day*, therefore, let all that would be saved attend to the voice of God; “lest he swear in his wrath, that they shall never enter into his rest.”

NOTES.

CHAP. XXV. V. 1—5. The implacable malice of the high-priest and the rulers against Paul, whose long confinement could not soften them, and their dark design of assassinating him, mark the horrible wickedness of the Jews, a short time before their final ruin, of which Josephus gives a most awful account. It was very wonderful, that Festus should refuse to gratify the great men of the nation, which he was appointed to govern, by sending for Paul to Jerusalem, as he staid in that city long enough to have heard his cause there. But God was pleased thus to influence his mind, in order to Paul’s preservation. When we consider how much edification to the Churches depended on Paul’s life, and how evidently, under God, his life depended on this resolution of Festus, it must surely lead us to reflect, by what invisible springs the blessed God governs the world; with what silence, and yet at the same time with what wisdom and energy! (*Doddridge*.) *Informed*. (2.) Or presented themselves before Festus on account of Paul. *Able*. (5.) That is, able to substantiate an accusation, or able, without material detriment, to take the journey to Cesarea, for this purpose.

V. 8. *Against Cesar*. The epistle to the Romans, in which submission to the existing powers is strongly inculcated, was written before this time.

70 xvi 37, 38. 384.
 25-28.

10 Then said Paul, ^m I stand at Cesar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong,

D 25 κκiii. 29.
 κκxvi 31. κκxviii

^a as thou very well knowest.

11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but, if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Cesar.

12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Cesar? ' unto Cesar shalt thou go.

13 ¶ And after certain days, ^s king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Cesarea, ^t to salute Festus.

14 And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, " There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix ;

15 About whom, ^x when I was at Jerusalem, the chief-priests and the elders of

the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him.

16 To whom I answered, ^v It is not ^v ^{4. 5.}
the manner of the Romans to deliver any
man to die, before that he which is ac-
cused have the accusers face to face, ^v and
have licence to answer for himself con-
cerning the crime laid against him.

17 Therefore, when they were come
hither, ^a without any delay on the morrow ^{a 6.}
I sat on the judgment-seat, and com-
manded the man to be brought forth;

18 Against whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed:

19 But had ^b certain questions against ^{b7 xviii. 15.}
him of their own ^c superstition, and of ^{xviii 29.}
one Jesus ^d which was dead, whom Paul ^{c xvii. 22, 23.}
affirmed to be alive. ^{di. 22. ii. 37.}
^{xvii. 31. xxi.}
^{22, 23. 1 Cor.}

20 And because I * doubted of such manner of questions, ^e I asked *him* whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters.

V. 9—11. Festus, though doubtless more and more convinced of Paul's innocence, was so desirous of obliging the principal persons among the Jews, that he proposed to Paul, that he should go to Jerusalem, and be tried there before him, in the presence of the council. How wonderful then was it, that he did not before send for him to Jerusalem, at the request of the same persons! It may be supposed that Festus was not aware of a conspiracy formed against his life; but probably the apostle was fully informed of it, or at least was assured that no kind or degree of violence or deceit would be wanting to take away his life. Still, though assured by the Lord himself that he should bear testimony to him at Rome, he used all proper means for his own preservation; so far was he from thinking that the Divine decrees and man's free agency are incompatible, or that the purposes of God, *even when known*, render the use of means needless or useless. The Roman governors were the emperor's representatives: the apostle, therefore, as a Roman citizen, when standing at the tribunal of Festus, was in the place where "he ought to be judged;" but, should he be sent to Jerusalem, to be tried under the influence of the Jewish rulers, he would, independently of plots and conspiracies, be deprived of his privilege. Had any crime been charged upon him that deserved death, he might have waived this privilege; but as Festus well knew that this was not the case, yet was ready to give him into the hands of his enemies as a special favour, by which he hoped to conciliate them, which no man had a right to do, the apostle felt himself authorized, and thought that Festus must see that he did right, in appealing to Cesar, and demanding that the emperor himself should decide his cause. Nero, who is still infamous for his excessive cruelty, was at that time the Roman emperor.

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V. 12. *Council.* Not of the Jews, but of the principal persons who attended the courts of the Roman governors.

V. 13. Agrippa was son to that Herod, who beheaded James, and imprisoned Peter, (xii.) He had received the title of king, and authority over several districts, from the Roman emperors. Bernice was his sister, a woman of a licentious character, who was suspected of living in incest with him. In other respects Agrippa bore a good character, being equitable in his administration, of a generous disposition, and paying a strict attention to the externals of religion.

V. 15. 'The judgment which they demanded against Paul was not a *trial*, but a *sentence upon a previous conviction*, which they falsely and wickedly pretended; and, probably, it was the knowledge that Festus had of Paul's being a Roman citizen, that engaged him to determine to try the cause himself. (Doddridge.)

V. 16. *To deliver any man to die.* Or, 'to give up
'any man to destruction, by way of gratifying or obliging
'others;' for this the original implies.

V. 19. *Superstition.* As Festus entertained Agrippa with great respect, so we cannot suppose that he would have used the word here translated *superstition*, if it had implied any harsh censure of his religion: we must therefore conclude that it was of a doubtful signification, to be understood in a good or evil sense, according to its application. Festus seems to have regarded Paul as a credulous visionary, in affirming that Jesus was alive; but he thought his opponents still more to blame, in persecuting him so virulently on that account; for the matter, in his judgment, was of no importance!

V. 20. *Doubled.* It is evident that Festus gave a very

21 But when Paul^f had appealed to me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, be reserved unto the * hearing of * Augustus.^h I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Cesar.

22 Thenⁱ Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. Tomorrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.

23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice,^k with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains and principal men of the city, at Festus's commandment Paul was brought forth.

24 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man,^l about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with

me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying,^m that he ought not to live any longer.

25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death,ⁿ and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.

26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write.

27 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes *laid* against him.

partial account of his own conduct; for, being convinced of Paul's innocence, and of the malice of his enemies, he was yet desirous of gratifying the Jews, by giving them every advantage against the object of their vengeance; nor is it probable that the apostle would have appealed to Cesar, had he not perceived this to be the drift of the proposal which Festus made to him.

V. 21. *Augustus*. This was the title, not the name, of the Roman emperor.

V. 22. 'No doubt but Agrippa had learnt from his father,' (Note, 13.) '—and from many others, something of the nature and pretensions of Christianity; so that he would naturally have a curiosity to see and discourse with so eminent a Christian teacher as Paul was; who, on account of what he had been in his unconverted state, was to be sure more regarded, and talked of among the Jews, than any other of the apostles.' (Doddridge.) Festus, thinking of no such thing, exposes the wickedness of the Jews, and shows the innocence of Paul, even in the presence of kings, and thus marvellously assissts the Church of God.' (Beza.)

V. 23. Perhaps this was as magnificent an assembly as ever was brought together to hear the truths of the Gospel, though none present meant any thing more than to gratify their curiosity, by attending the defence of Paul the prisoner. The word rendered *pomp*, implies ostentation, or affectation of worldly splendour. (Marg. Ref.)

V. 26, 27. *Lord*. Or, The lord and ruler of the vast Roman empire: a pompous title, then generally given to the emperors. The pronoun *my*, is not found in the most approved copies and manuscripts. The motive of Festus, in bringing Paul before this company, evidently was, that he might collect something from Agrippa and those present, which would enable him to write to the emperor in a manner more creditable to himself, and less unreasonable or absurd, than it seemed in present circumstances practicable for him. But the Lord had far other and higher reasons for influencing his mind to a measure, in various respects leading to most important consequences.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—12.

The malignant enmity of hardened persecutors cannot be worn out by length of time, or satisfied by any sufferings short of the violent death of those against whom they are enraged. They deem it a peculiar favour when their malice is gratified; and they have no scruples about conspiracies, assassinations, or massacres, when legal forms fail of effecting their purposes. We cannot therefore too much watch against the feeblest risings of that principle, which may be matured into such dire excesses. But God limits the rage of the most unprincipled men by the intervention of others, not at all more conscientious in many things than themselves; and sometimes he influences them *unaccountably* to act contrary to their own general purposes, in such particulars as form a part of his plan. Happy will it be for us, when "many and grievous complaints" are brought against us, if our accusers can prove none of them; and if we can show that we have conscientiously obeyed the civil magistrate, behaved peaceably in the community, and attended on the ordinances and worship of God. When these things are evident, a man may have great boldness before his judges, in appealing to their consciences with respect to his innocence, or in claiming the protection of the law, against the iniquity of those who want to be gratified by his punishment. But how scandalous is it to the professors and ministers of religion, when the servants of God are compelled to appeal from their bigoted malice to the decision of idolaters, and even of the most cruel tyrants, as more likely to do them justice than they are!

V. 13—27.

The questions which relate to the worship of God, the way of salvation, and the truths of the Gospel, appear dubious and uninteresting to the politicians and wise men of the world. They can see and condemn the mismanagement into which men are betrayed by an indiscreet or furious zeal; and this confirms them in their skeptical disregard to religion in general. Yet the day is at hand,

CHAP. XXVI.

Paul, before Agrippa, declares his manner of life, and his hope as a Pharisee, 1—8; his zeal in persecuting the Church, 9—11; his wonderful conversion, and call to the apostleship, 12—18; and his subsequent preaching and testimony to Christ, according to the scriptures, 19—23. Festus exclaims that he is mad, but he mildly denies the charge, 24, 25; and addresses Agrippa, who owns himself almost persuaded to be a Christian, 26—28. Paul expresses his earnest wish, that every one present were altogether Christians, 29. Agrippa and the company agree with Festus that Paul is innocent, 30—32.

whereof I am accused of the Jews; 3 Especially, ^a because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee ^c to hear me patiently.

4 My ^d manner of life from my youth, ^e which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews;

5 Which knew me from the beginning, (^b if they would testify,) ^f that after the most straitest ^g sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee.

6 And now I stand, and ^h I am judged for the hope of ⁱ the promise made of God unto our fathers:

7 Unto which promise ^j our twelve tribes, ^k instantly serving God ^l day and night, ^m hope to come: ⁿ for which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

8 Why ^o should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

9 V. 4—8. 'Paul, dividing the narrative of his life into two parts cites his adversaries themselves as witnesses of the former part, and the fathers and prophets to attest the latter part.' (Beza.) After a brief account of his religion, as a Pharisee, which was the strictest and most austere sect of the nation, and an appeal to the Jews themselves, that he had acted in consistency with that profession, from his youth to the time when he became a Christian, the apostle declared that he stood as a criminal, to be judged on account of his professed hope in the promise made of God to their ancestors. Many commentators suppose the apostle to mean almost exclusively, that the resurrection to eternal life was "the promise made unto the fathers;" but it is manifest, that the promise of a Saviour was the most prominent part of the

a xxv. 18. Prov. xviii. 13. 17. John vii. 51.

b Prov. i. 24. Ez. xvi. 27. Rom. x. 21. c. 2. See on xxii. 1.

THEN Agrippa said unto Paul, ^a Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul ^b stretched forth the hand, and ^c answered for himself:

2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because ^d I shall answer for myself this day before thee, touching all the things

when Festus and the whole world will see, that all the concerns of the vast Roman empire were frivolous as the sports of children, compared with the single question, whether Jesus the crucified was or was not risen from the dead, according to the doctrine of the apostle. Then they, who have had the means of instruction and have despised them, will be most awfully convinced of their sin and folly. But alas, many, who seem to desire information on such questions, only want to gratify a vain curiosity, and not to learn the way to heaven; and the great pomp, with which numbers of the rich and honourable of this world attend at "the places of hearing" the word of God, shows, that they are actuated by the same motives as Paul's splendid auditory were. Though ministers do not commonly now stand in fetters, as prisoners, to make their defence before their hearers, yet numbers affect rather to sit in judgment on them, as "offenders for a word," than to learn from them the truth and will of God, for the salvation of their own souls; and too many preachers seem more anxious to please such splendid congregations, than to "declare the whole counsel of God," and to "keep themselves pure from the blood of all men."

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVI. V. 1—3. Agrippa having signified to Paul that he was allowed to plead his own cause, in order that a more authentic account of his case might be sent to the emperor, he stretched out his hand, with a decent action, to give emphasis to his words, according to the manner of the most celebrated ancient orators, and proceeded to state his subject in that manner, which was

most suited to impress the audience with a conviction of its truth and importance. The subsequent speech has generally been allowed to be peculiarly pertinent, convincing, and suited to the circumstances, in which, and the splendid company before whom, it was delivered. He addressed himself immediately to Agrippa, declaring that he deemed it a happy incident, that he was permitted to defend himself from the accusations of the Jews, before one whose education and subsequent application had rendered him so accurately acquainted with all the customs and rites of the Jewish religion, and all the questions controverted among their different sects; as he would be far more competent to form a judgment of his cause than any stranger could be. He therefore besought the favour of a candid and patient hearing, whilst he went through the several particulars which he had to state on the subject.

V. 4—8. 'Paul, dividing the narrative of his life into two parts cites his adversaries themselves as witnesses of the former part, and the fathers and prophets to attest the latter part.' (Beza.) After a brief account of his religion, as a Pharisee, which was the strictest and most austere sect of the nation, and an appeal to the Jews themselves, that he had acted in consistency with that profession, from his youth to the time when he became a Christian, the apostle declared that he stood as a criminal, to be judged on account of his professed hope in the promise made of God to their ancestors. Many commentators suppose the apostle to mean almost exclusively, that the resurrection to eternal life was "the promise made unto the fathers;" but it is manifest, that the promise of a Saviour was the most prominent part of the

John xvi 2, 3.
Rom. x 2 Gal
1. 13, 14 1 Cor
11. 6. 1 Tim. 1.
12
11. 6. 1x. 18.
xvi 13 xxi. 8.
12
1. 17. 59. xiii. 1.
1x. 13. 26. xxi.
4. 19. 20. 1 Cor.
xv.
xvi. 32. 41. Pa.
xvi 3 Rom
xv. 25. 26. Eph
1. 1. Rev. xvi. 6.
y ix 14 21. xvi.
5
2 Matt. x. 17.
Mark. xii. 13.
Luke xxi. 12.
x. 45. xv. 11.
2 Mark ii. 28.
11x. x 28 29
Jam. ii 7
3. Luke vi. 11
xv. 17. 2 Pet. ii
10
1x. 1, 2 xxi. 5.
10 1 Kings xvi.
6-10 Pa. xv.
20. 1x. 1.
Jer. xxi. 8.
xxix. 26. 27
John vii. 45-
48
1x. 3 xxi. 6.
1x. xxi. 21.
Nxx. 26. Matt
x. 23. Rev. i.
16. xxi. 21.

9 I verily thought with myself, * that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

10 Which thing ^u I also did in Jerusalem: and many of * the saints did I shut up in prison, ^v having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.

11 And I punished them oft * in every synagogue, * and compelled them to blaspheme: and being exceedingly ^b mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

12 Whereupon, * as I went to Damascus, ^d with authority and commission from the chief priests,

13 At * mid-day, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, ^f above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying, * in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

It is ⁱ hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, * I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.

16 But ⁱ rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, ^m to make thee ^a a minister and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things ^o in the which I will appear unto thee;

17 ^p Delivering thee from the people, and from ^q the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

18 To ^r open their eyes, * and to turn them from darkness to light, ^t and from the power of Satan unto God, ^u that they may receive ^v forgiveness of sins, * and inheritance among them which are ^w sanctified, by ^x faith that is in me.

ix. 15. xxi. 21. xxvii. 28 Rom. xi. 13. xv. 6 Gal. ii. 9. Eph. iii. 7. 8. 1 Tim. i. 11. iv. 17. — ix. 17. 18. Pa. cxv. 18. cxvii. 8. 1x. xxi. 3. xxi. 5. xxi. 7. xxi. 8. Luke ix. 18. xxi. 45. John ix. 39. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Eph. i. 12. — 23. xxi. 47. 1x. 2. xxi. 8. 1x. 1-3. Matt. iv. 2. Matt. iv. 16. vi. 22. 21. Luke i. 79. ii. 32. John i. 4-9. iii. 19. vii. 12. ix. 5. xii. 35. 36. 2 Cor. iv. 14. Eph. v. 8. 14. 1 Pet. ii. 9. 1 John ii. 8. 9. — 1x. xxi. 21. 22. Luke xi. 21. 22. Col. 1. 13. 2 Tim. ii. 26. Heb. ii. 14. 15. 1 John iii. 15. Rev. xxi. 2. 3. — 2x. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

revelation made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the grand subject of prophecy, (*Marg. Ref.*) while the doctrine of the resurrection was not so fully and plainly revealed in the Old Testament, as it is in the New. St. Paul says elsewhere, "We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again." (xiii. 32, 33.) Thus the resurrection of Jesus proved that he was the promised Messiah, against all the unbelieving Jews, and the doctrine of the resurrection, against the Sadducees. The latter were instigated to persecute the apostle, for "preaching through Jesus the resurrection of the dead," the former, for preaching the very person whom they had crucified as the Messiah, and as risen and exalted to be a Prince and Saviour. Yet the whole nation expected a Messiah, and all except the Sadducees professed to believe the doctrine of the resurrection. In general, all that remained of the twelve tribes, wherever dispersed, hoped for the accomplishment of the promise concerning the Messiah, and a resurrection to eternal life through him; and their constant worship at the temple, morning and evening, as well as their other frequent and incessant devotions, implied the same hope. And as the resurrection of Jesus was proved by most unexceptionable and abundant testimony, and might be shown to be the fulfilment of ancient prophecies, what reason could be given, why it should not be credited? "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" Was not the great Creator able to restore the dead

to life again? And could not sufficient reasons be assigned for his omnipotent interposition, that his truth might be attested, his worshippers encouraged, and his name glorified? Thus the apostle makes a natural and easy transition from the hope of their fathers, and the doctrine of the resurrection, to that which was his principal subject, namely, the proof which he intended to adduce, that Jesus was indeed risen, and was the promised Messiah. Some render the eighth verse thus, "What! Is it a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" and that gives a peculiar animation to the question.

V. 9-11. The apostle himself had formerly been extremely prejudiced against the gospel, and had thought it his duty to do many things against the name and religion of Jesus, who was usually in contempt called the Nazarene. Accordingly, he had at Jerusalem, by the authority of the chief-priests, imprisoned many of those excellent persons, whom he now knew to be the saints and holy servants of God; and when any of them were condemned to death by the council, he had approved and applauded the sentence, and promoted its execution. He had also, by means of scourging and other severities, in all the synagogues, and by threatening them with death, compelled many professors and favourers of Christianity to deny and revile the Saviour as a deceiver, in language which he now thus publicly declared to be blasphemy; and in every respect he was enraged against them, to a degree, which might justly be deemed the excess of madness and insanity.

V. 12-15. (*Notes*, ix. 1-19. xxi. 5-16. *Marg. Ref.*)

19 Whereupon, ^a O king Agrippa, I was not dissuaded unto the heavenly vision :

20 But shewed ^c first unto them of Damascus, ^d and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, ^e and then to the Gentiles, that they should ^f repent and ^g turn to God, ^h and do works meet for repentance.

21 For these causes ⁱ the Jews caught

me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

22 Having therefore ^k obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, ^l witnessing both to small and great, saying ^m none other things than those which ⁿ the prophets and Moses did say should come ;

23 That ^o Christ should suffer, and that he should be ^p the first that should rise from the dead, ^q and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

V. 16—18. It seems evident that this commission was given to Paul by our Lord at the time of his conversion, though not mentioned in the compendious narrative of that event. 'The words make a part of the sentence, 'in which Christ bids him rise from the astonishment 'into which his appearance to him in the way to Damascus had thrown him.' (*Doddridge.*) Jesus called on him to arise from the earth, as prepared to receive and execute his mandates. He had appeared to him, not to destroy him, but to appoint him a minister of his Gospel, and a witness to all men, not only of this vision, but of many other things, which he would afterwards reveal to him from time to time. For executing this ministry the Jews would indeed seek to kill him, but Jesus promised to deliver him from them, and from the Gentiles, to whom he now gave him a commission to preach his salvation. The end and effect of his ministry among them, through the power of the Holy Spirit accompanying his word, would be, "to open their eyes;" for though their bodily eyes were open, and their intellectual powers in secular matters were very penetrating, yet they had hitherto been spiritually blind, through the influence of the devil, and the depravity of their carnal minds, so that they could see nothing of the glory of God, of his truth and will, or of the way of acceptance and holiness. But by the change to be wrought in their minds by divine grace, and by the instructions of his word, they would be turned from the darkness of ignorance, error, and wickedness, to the light of divine knowledge, truth, and holiness, and from those idolatries and vices, by which they worshipped and served Satan as his bond-slaves, to the holy worship and service of the living God, that, through the Gospel, they might receive a full pardon of all their sins, and be made heirs of that heavenly inheritance, to which all those who are renewed to holiness will be admitted, by faith in him as the Saviour of lost mankind. *By faith, &c.* 'This may be referred to *sanctified* ; but 'the sentence is much fuller, if we join it with the word 'receive.' (*Besa.*) No doubt we are *sanctified* as well as *justified* by faith in Christ, but the words under consideration seem to show that all the blessings mentioned are thus received, and not one of them only. The distinction between "opening their eyes, and turning them from "darkness to light," should be noticed. Had the eyes of the ignorant Gentiles been opened by divine grace, and no light of scriptural instruction given them, they must still

have groped in the dark, as a seeing man does in a dark room ; had the light of truth been sent, but the illumination of the Holy Spirit withheld, their condition would have resembled that of blind men in the full light of day. But full instruction was given them by the Gospel, and their minds and hearts were prepared to receive it by regeneration. (*Marg. Ref.*) Though Paul received this commission to the Gentiles at the time when he was converted, yet he did not preach to any but Jews, and proselytes, till after Cornelius had been converted by the ministry of Peter ; for he waited for further intimations of the Lord's will, as to the time and manner in which he was to set about that important service. To confine the language of this passage, as if it were only applicable to idolaters, implies an opinion that nominal Christians are of a better nature than other men ; or that pride, covetousness, and all the other vices, by which men are enslaved to Satan, are not so heinous in professed Christians, as they were in heathens. Gross idolatry, indeed, has been exchanged for irreligion, infidelity, superstition, formality, and hypocrisy, among mere nominal Christians ; but their hearts and minds are as much blinded by aversion to spiritual religion, and by the love of the world and of sin, as those of the ancient Gentiles were.

V. 19—23. The apostle next intimated to king Agrippa, that he could not suppose he would refuse obedience to a vision, which was so evidently from heaven ; accordingly he began to preach to the Jews first, and at length to the Gentiles, calling on them to repent of all their sins, to turn to the worship and service of God, and to live holy lives, as became true penitents, and thus to expect the mercy and favour of God through Jesus Christ. For such causes as these the Jews, being exasperated with him for declaring that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was the Messiah, and for preaching to the Gentiles, seized on him in the temple, and would have murdered him, if they had not been prevented ; but, having obtained help from God, by means of Lysias, Felix, Festus, and others, his life had hitherto been preserved, and he had employed it in testifying to the poorest of mankind, as well as to the rich and honourable, the grace of the Gospel ; in which he had said nothing but what accorded to the types and predictions of the law, as well as to the express and repeated language of the prophets. These foretold that the Messiah would suffer and die, and yet that he was to reign in a most glorious manner, and consequently that he should

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24 ¶ And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul,

Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

29 And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether, such as I am, except these bonds.

30 ¶ And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them:

31 And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.

32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cesar.

rise from the dead, as the first-fruits of the resurrection; and that he was not only to show the light of salvation to the people of Israel, but to the Gentiles also. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 21—29. Whilst Paul was confirming his testimony to the resurrection and glory of Jesus, by the predictions of Scripture, and probably was preparing to adduce more particular proof from the prophets to each part of his doctrine, he was suddenly interrupted by Festus. He had never heard any thing before upon these subjects; the resurrection of Jesus, and the vision of Paul, appeared to him incredible or ridiculous; probably he was astonished to hear him speak of his doctrine as of universal concernment, and aver that one, who arose among the despised Jews, was appointed to be the Light of the Gentiles, even the philosophical Greeks and Romans. He therefore interrupted the apostle, by saying, in a loud voice, "Paul, thou art beside thyself, &c." He perhaps had observed, that the apostle spent much time in reading, and he supposed, that, having studied very closely about such abstract and visionary matters, his over-attention had deranged his intellects, so that he could neither deem him fit to be blamed, or credited, but to be an object of mere compassion. To this rude interruption, before so large and splendid an audience, the apostle calmly and gravely replied, (addressing the governor by the customary title of *most noble*, or *most excellent*), and assured him that he was not mad, and that he declared nothing but what had truth for its basis, was of the utmost importance, and able to stand the test of the most deliberate investigation. Indeed, the king was acquainted with such subjects; the events respecting the miracles, doctrine, death, and reported resurrection of Jesus, and the subsequent promulgation of Christianity, could not have been hid from one, who was so well informed in all the affairs of the Jews; for these things had not been transacted in an obscure corner, but in the most public manner. He would therefore inquire of him, whether he did believe that the old prophets spake by divine inspiration, and that their predictions would be certainly fulfilled? Yet indeed he knew that he would answer in the affirmative, for he doubted not but he did thus believe them; and he only desired Agrippa to examine whether they had not exactly been fulfilled in Jesus of

Nazareth. This appeal to the Scriptures, joined to Paul's other arguments, had so great an effect upon Agrippa's mind, that he could not conceal his convictions, but openly declared that Paul had almost persuaded him to become a Christian. His understanding and judgment were for the time convinced, but his heart was not changed; and he was aware, that the sacrifices to be made, and the cross to be sustained, would in such a case be very great; and though he was more candid and just in his government than others of his family, yet his conduct and temper were widely distant from the spirituality and humility of the Gospel. The apostle, however, desirous to fix the impression upon his mind, replied, in the genuine spirit of Christian love, that he earnestly wished and prayed, that both he, and every one in the assembly, might not only be *almost*, but *altogether*, established in the faith of the Gospel, and partakers of all its substantial blessings and consolations; and, in short, entirely like him in every thing, except in his bonds and imprisonment, which he would wish to bear alone. This most benevolent wish implied his full conviction of the truth of the Gospel, the absolute necessity of faith in Christ in order to salvation, his opinion that Agrippa, Festus, and others present, did not then believe, and his fear that they would reject the Gospel, to their final condemnation.

V. 30—32. Agrippa, like Felix, seems to have been made very uneasy by St. Paul's convincing and impressive address; he was therefore the first to dismiss the subject, and to retire from the place of hearing. His opinion that Paul was innocent would tend to give Festus a more favourable opinion of him; but it does not appear, that any of them inquired further after Christ and his salvation; and this most admirable speech of the apostle seems to have been peculiarly unsuccessful, as to the event of it at that time. Learned men have shown, that no laws against the Christians had at this time been enacted by the Roman legislature.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—11.

The Lord will never fail to give those who for his

CHAP. XXVII.

Paul, attended by some friends, sails as a prisoner towards Rome, and is kindly used by the Centurion, 1—8. He foretells the danger of the voyage, but is not credited, 9—11. Sailing against his advice, they are exposed to a most violent

and long continued tempest, and are in extreme danger, 10—20. Paul, encouraged by an angel, assures them that all their lives should be preserved, but that the ship would be wrecked, 21—26; the whole of which accordingly came to pass, 27—44.

cause are called to appear before rulers and councils, “a mouth and wisdom, which none of their adversaries shall be able to gainsay or resist.” When Christian love abounds in the heart, it will dictate a *sincere* language, far surpassing all compliment and worldly politeness; and teach us to “render honour to whom honour is due,” without flattery or fear of man. That religious knowledge which unconverted men acquire, and their expertness about customs and questions in divinity, in general lie dormant, as mere learned lumber, in the understanding; yet, if attended with a measure of candour, they render them more accessible to truth, and more competent to judge of the evidence adduced in support of it. Nor is it any flattery to give such men the credit of their attainments, or improper to entreat a *patient* hearing, when the subject might demand the most reverent attention. A moral conduct and a form of godliness are often connected with a bigoted aversion to the Gospel, and this leads to many other heinous crimes; yet it is a mercy to be preserved, during our unconverted years, from such vices, as might afterwards disgrace our characters among worldly people, and so prevent the influence of our testimony; and this is greatly corroborated, when they who knew our manner of life from our youth, could testify, that we then acted consistently with our principles, and according to what we thought right; for they may thence infer that our change of sentiment and conduct also originated from a regard to our duty. Men are often censured and persecuted for professing their hope in the express promises of God, and for a consequent expectation of the resurrection, and future state of righteous retributions; and numbers repeat creeds, subscribe doctrines, and join in forms of worship, habitually, and with apparent earnestness, and yet condemn others for explicitly professing the truths contained in them! Many things are deemed incredible, because the infinite nature and perfection of that God, who hath revealed, performed, or promised them, are overlooked; and because men will not see how his power and glory are concerned in them. They, who have been most strict in their conduct, previous to conversion, will afterwards see abundant cause for deep humiliation, even on account of some things which they verily thought that they ought to do; their contemptuous or injurious treatment of the saints, their opposition to the Gospel, and their endeavours to seduce, reason, or terrify others into a neglect of it, will often sit very heavily on their minds; and they will condemn those words as impious and blasphemous, which they once uttered, or excited others to utter, without remorse, and allow that conduct to be madness, in which they once gloried.

V. 12—23.

The true convert can give a reason of his hope, and a

good account of the change which has taken place in him, even when there is nothing extraordinary in his experience. Having been convinced of his guilt and danger, as a transgressor of God’s law, and a stranger to his grace, or a despiser of it, he was led to seek for mercy, and to believe in the Lord Jesus; and, having been encouraged with the hope of acceptance, of increasing light and continued protection, he began to employ himself in his service. Thus the Lord reconciles sinners to himself, and sometimes commits to them the word of reconciliation; he sends them to their fellow sinners, to beseech them in his stead to be reconciled to him; and, by his power attending their word, he “opens their eyes, turns them from “darkness to light, delivers them from the kingdom and “power of Satan,” forms them spiritual worshippers of God, forgives their sins, adopts them into his family, sanctifies them by his grace, and brings them to his heavenly inheritance, by faith in his name. They who are thus enlightened and favoured, will not be disobedient to the commands of the Redeemer; and all, who understand and preach the Gospel, will perceive that it contains directions, motives, and encouragements to sinners, to repent and turn to God, and to do works meet for repentance, and that it has no saving efficacy on the heart, where these fruits do not appear in the life. Yet, for calling on men thus to repent and be converted, and for witnessing none other things than what are evidently contained in the holy Scriptures, what numbers have been execrated, persecuted, and slain, even by the professed worshippers of God! So that it is owing to the peculiar help and protection of God, when zealous and laborious preachers of the Gospel are preserved from violence, and have their lives and the term of their faithful testimony continued to them.

V. 24—32.

The very persons whom God employs to protect his servants often despise them as visionaries, or madmen, for being so zealous about invisible objects, for believing such mysterious subjects, crediting such extraordinary facts, and relating such remarkable experiences, and for attesting that the same faith and diligence, and an experience in many respects similar, are indispensably necessary to all men, both small and great, in order to their salvation. Indeed, few ascribe the insanity of modern teachers to deep study, or much learning; but they rather impute it to weakness of intellect, or contemptible ignorance: whatever evidences they give of good sense, enlarged minds, and extensive knowledge, in other subjects. But as apostles and prophets, (nay the Son of God himself,) were exposed to this obloquy, let us not be moved, if they who deemed us sober and intelligent when we were *exceedingly*

AND ^a when it was determined that we should sail into ^b Italy, they delivered Paul, and certain other prisoners, unto ^c one named Julius, ^e a centurion of ^d Augustus' band.

2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, ^e we launched, meaning ^f to sail by the coast of Asia; ^g one ^h Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being ^b with us.

3 And the next day we touched at Sidon. And ^k Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave ^l him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.

mad, should set us down for *insane*, now divine grace has brought us to ourselves, and made us wise unto salvation. Yet let us be careful, on such occasions, to speak with temper; that we may disprove the charge by a dispassionate conduct, as well as by the words of truth and soberness. We should likewise cautiously avoid all *real enthusiasm*, and whatever is ambiguous or incapable of good proof: whilst we deny, and attempt to refute, the charge of being visionaries and fanatics. It is highly important for us to lead men's attention, by important doctrines and well authenticated facts, to the sacred oracles, as the standard of truth; and whilst we inquire whether our hearers do believe the Scriptures, we should, as much as may be, take it for granted that they do: for, many assent to the truth of the Bible, and pay a respect to testimonies from it, who have not yet understood or received the doctrines, or salvation there revealed. Arguments and testimonies of this kind *almost persuade* numbers to be Christians, who yet are never *wholly* induced to leave all for Christ. When this is the case, they often grow weary of hearing the truth, and sin away conviction: and their own confessions will eventually increase their condemnation, for rejecting the Gospel, out of love to the world and sinful pleasures. Whilst we beware of this fatal hesitation and irresolution in our own conduct; and recollect how far being *almost persuaded to be a Christian* is, from being altogether such a one as Paul was, or as every true believer is; we should endeavour to impress still more deeply the minds of those who are under serious convictions of the truth. In doing this, the language of fervent, disinterested affection is peculiarly becoming: and we should sincerely desire and pray, that others may participate all our hopes and comforts, and be exempted from our crosses and trials. Yet even this beautiful philanthropy, when expressed in the most graceful and conciliatory language, will fail to recommend the holy Gospel to the carnal hearts of worldly men: they will grow weary of such humiliating and serious reflections; and even when they deem the preacher a man of integrity, and almost think he has truth on his side: they will not allow his saying to be worthy of all acceptance, or faith in Christ producing prompt obedience to his precepts, to be *absolutely necessary* to their salvation. Alas, how many such persons have been *almost persuaded* to be Christians, who at last perished in their sins! God grant, that none, who read these

4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under ¹ Cyprus, because ^m the winds were contrary.

5 And when we had sailed over the sea of ^a Cilicia, and ^c Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia.

6 And there ^p the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.

7 And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, ^r we sailed ^s under ^t Crete, over against Salmone;

observations may be found in that unhappy number!

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVII. V. 1, 2. 'Paul, among prisoners indeed, and through various forms of death, yet distinguished by many splendid testimonies, is led to Rome, as by the hand of God himself.' (*Beza*.) It was determined by Festus and his council to send Paul, with some other prisoners, to Italy; that at Rome he might be judged by the emperor, to whom he had appealed: and he was, according to the general custom, committed to the care of a centurion with soldiers under him. As this centurion belonged to the emperor's own cohort, or regiment, it is probable, that he was going to Rome on other business.—Adramyttium was a city of Mysia, on the coast of Asia: this ship therefore, if only returning thither, could convey the company but a small part of their long voyage. Aristarchus of whom mention has repeatedly been made, (*Marg. Ref.*) is called by the apostle, his "fellow prisoner;" yet it is likely, that this was rather by choice than compulsion. The historian himself likewise attended the apostle, and so speaks in the first person plural, in many parts of the narrative. This was a singular instance of the great affection of Luke and Aristarchus for the apostle, and a great solace to him under all his trials: and they would be in many ways assistant to him, in all his plans for usefulness, both during the voyage and after he arrived at Rome.

V. 3. It may be supposed, that the opinion of Festus, and the concessions made by king Agrippa, had induced the centurion to treat Paul with attention and kindness: regarding him perhaps as an injured man, and bearing some degree of respect for his integrity and talents. It is probable, that there were Christians at Sidon at this time, though nothing further is recorded concerning them.

V. 4, 5. The wind being contrary, the mariners found it necessary to sail between Cyprus and the continent; and then, turning to the west, to pursue their voyage near the southern shore of Asia Minor, till they came to Myra. But, had the wind been favourable, they would have sailed to the west of Cyprus, by a direct course to the same place. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 6. Vast quantities of corn were sent to Rome from Alexandria in Egypt, and it is probable this ship was employed in that trade.

8 And hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The Fair Havens, nigh whereunto was the city of Lasca.

9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them,

10 And said unto them, Sirs, "I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much * damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

11 Nevertheless, the centurion, * believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

12 And because ^r the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of ^r Crete, and lieth toward the south-west and north-west.

13 And when ^a the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete.

14 But ^b not long after there † arose

against it ^c a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.

15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, ^d we let her drive.

16 And running under a certain island, which is called Claudia, we had much work to come by the boat:

17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and ^e fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.

18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, ^f the next day they lightened the ship;

19 And the third day ^g we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

20 And when ^h neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, ⁱ and no small tempest lay on us, ^k all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

21 But ^l after long abstinence, Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ^m ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete,

^r Lev. xvi. 23.
xxvii. 27-29.
Num. xxix. 7.

^a 21-28. 30. 34.
Gen. vi. 16. 25.
38, 39. Ps. xxv.
13. Dan. ii. 30.
Am. iii. 7.
^b Or, injury. 20.
41-43. 1 Pet.
i. 10.
^c 21. Ex. ix. 20.
22. 2 Kings vi.
10. Prov. xxvii.
12. Ez. iii. 17.
18. xxviii. 4.
Heb. xii. 7.

^d Ps. cxvii. 30.

27

^e Job xxxviii. 17.
Ps. lxxviii. 25.
Cant. iv. 16.
Luke xii. 55.

^f Ex. xiv. 21-27.
Je. xli. 9. Jon.
i. 3, 4.
† Or, break.

^c Ps. cxv. 23-27.
Ez. xxi. 7. 24.
Matt. xvi. 37.
Mark iv. 37.

^d 27. Jam. iii. 4.

^e 19. 20. Jos. 1. 5.
Matt. xxi. 27.
Luke xxi. 8.
Phil. ii. 7. 8.
Heb. xii. 1.
^f Job i. 4. Mark.
vii. 35-37. Luke
ix. 21, 25.

^h Ex. x. 21-23.
Ps. cv. 28.
Matt. xxiv. 24.
ⁱ Ps. cxvii. 25-27.
Jon. i. 4. 11.
14. Matt. viii.
21, 25. 2 Cor. x.
23.
^k Is. lxiii. 10. Jer.
ii. 25. Ez.
xxxviii. 11. Eze.
ix. 12. 17. 20.
iv. 13.
^l 33-35. Ps. cxvii.
3. 6.
^m 9. 10. Gen.
xlii. 22.

V. 7. *Crete.* A large island in the Mediterranean, now called Candia.

V. 9. The fast, or great day of atonement, was in the seventh month, or the latter end of September, when sailing was thought dangerous; for in that imperfect state of navigation, the mariners commonly kept within a moderate distance of the shore, and seldom put to sea during the winter-season. Some commentators suppose, that the *Michaelmas* flows, which are peculiar to the Mediterranean sea, are referred to; but I apprehend, at present, the Mediterranean is navigated at Michaelmas and in winter, as well as other seas.

V. 10. The apostle doubtless had an intimation from God of the approaching storm, and foresaw that much damage would be sustained by it, and their lives exposed to great danger, though the particular event of it was not yet made known to him. The centurion, and all on board the ship, must have had some general knowledge of Paul's character and principles; and the religious converse and worship of him and his friends, as well as their whole behaviour, must have excited their attention: but they probably regarded them as deluded men, entitled indeed to civil usage, being very inoffensive and well meaning, yet not worthy of notice as to their religious opinions. But it was the Lord's purpose to exhibit Paul among them as a most extraordinary person, that they might learn to inquire after his principles, and receive his instructions.

V. 11. 'Men, by following their own prudence, rather than the word of God, by the mouth of his servants,
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'of their own will run themselves and one another into infinite dangers.' (*Beza.*)

V. 12. *Phenice.* This harbour seems to have been situated on the west side of the island, and to have been defended from the fury of the winds by a high and winding shore, forming a kind of semicircle, and perhaps by some island in front, leaving only two openings, one towards the south-west, and the other towards the north-west.

V. 13. *Close.* The mariners kept as near within shore as they safely could, that they might not be driven out to sea.

V. 14, 15. This tempest seems to have come from the east, as its name imports, yet to have violently and frequently shifted its direction, and thus excited such tremendous agitation of the waves, that the ship could not be made to face the storm; but the mariners were obliged to let her drive before it, though at the hazard of being dashed upon the rocks, or otherwise wrecked.

V. 16. *Boat, &c.* The seamen laboured to secure the boat, as a resource in case the ship were wrecked, but it pleased God not to make any use of it in their deliverance. (32.)

V. 17. *Quicksands.* These are supposed to have been the greater and lesser Syrtis, towards the coast of Africa, which were extremely formidable to ancient navigators.

V. 19. *Tackling.* That is, the ship-stores, which were carried for future use, in case they should be wanted. In this perilous emergency, the mariners cast every thing overboard, which could possibly be spared, as the only method in which they could hope to keep the ship from foundering.

and to have gained this harm and loss.

22 And now ^a I exhort you to be of good cheer: ^a for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.

23 For ^p there stood by me this night the angel of God, ^q whose I am, ^r and whom I serve,

24 Saying, ^a Fear not, Paul; ^a thou must be brought before Cesar: and, ^a lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for ^a I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

26 Howbeit, we must be cast upon a certain island.

27 ¶ But when ^a the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and

down in Adria, about midnight ^a the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country;

28 And sounded, and found ⁱ twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found ⁱ fifteen fathoms.

29 Then fearing lest they should have ^b fallen upon rocks, they cast four ^a anchors out of the stern, ^d and wished for the day.

30 And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down ^a the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the ^f foreship,

31 Paul ^a said to the centurion and to the soldiers, ^b Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

32 Then ⁱ the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

V. 20—26. As the mariners could not make the necessary observations, because the sun and stars were totally hidden by clouds, so they could not discover to what part of the sea they had been driven, and as the tempest still lay hard upon them, and allowed them no respite to repair their shattered vessel, they gave up all for lost, and expected every moment to go to the bottom, or to be dashed upon the rocks. This prepared them to regard Paul's words, which in more prosperous circumstances they might have despised. As he had before been assured of bearing testimony to Jesus at Rome, we may suppose that he was composed during the whole tempest; but the Lord was pleased to send him further assurances, respecting his own preservation and that of all the company. After they had all neglected for some time to take proper sustenance, through the terror of immediate death, and after Paul and his friends had perhaps spent some time in fasting and prayer, he stood forth before the mariners, and reminded them of the divine admonition that he had before given them, by neglecting of which they had gained nothing of what they had expected, but only exposed themselves to great injury and disgrace; and this might be considered as a fine levied on them for their disobedience. He, however, exhorted them to be of good courage, as he was authorized to assure them of the preservation of all their lives. For that God, whose property he was in an especial manner, whom he worshipped continually, and whom he served with all his powers, by preaching the Gospel of his Son, had sent his angel, (who knew where to find him, though they knew not where they were), and by him he had assured him of being preserved to stand before the Roman emperor, and also had informed him, that he had granted his prayers and fervent desires, and for his sake would save the lives of all those who sailed with him. He therefore exhorted them to be cheerful, and hope amidst their perils, for he believed assuredly that

God would fulfil his word, as he knew him to be always faithful to his promises. The ship, however, would certainly be wrecked, and they would be cast upon an island, and not on any part of the continents, either of Europe, Asia, or of Africa; by which circumstance it would be manifested that he spake by revelation from God.

V. 27. *Adria*. This name was not then confined to what is now called the Adriatic Sea, but was extended to a much larger part of the Mediterranean.

V. 29—32. The mariners, afraid of being driven in the dark on the rocks or sands, which are found near the shore, used their utmost endeavours to bring the ship to anchor, and they waited with earnest longings for daylight, that they might discover where they were, and what methods could be used for their preservation. They were fully sensible of the extreme danger to which the ship was exposed, but hoped to save themselves in the boat, thus leaving the passengers to their fate. This selfish purpose, however, they endeavoured to conceal; but the apostle, perceiving what they were about to do, assured the centurion and the soldiers that they could not be preserved, unless the mariners remained with them, and they paid so much regard to his judgment, as immediately to cut the ropes by which the boat was fastened, and to give her up to the sea. It was the purpose of God to save the lives of the company by means of the mariners, and they must not tempt him by neglecting the proper method of self-preservation. Nothing could be more absolute than the promise above given, (24.) yet neither the centurion nor the soldiers charge Paul with inconsistency, in what he now says to them. If the end was absolutely decreed, the means of attaining it were so likewise; and the case is the same, in concerns of still higher importance. 'God hath indeed assured me, that none of all our lives shall miscarry in this danger; but that God, who hath ordained our preservation, hath also ordained the means thereof,

25 36 xxii 11.
1 Sam xx. 6.
22 1 S. 9. Job
xxii 29, 30 Ps
cxix 5 18 xliii
12 2 Cor i 4-6
21 24 41 455
1 4
p v 10 xii 8-11
23 xxi 11 Dan.
vi 22 Heb 14
Rev xii 16.
q Ex. xix 5.
Deut. xxvii 9.
Ps cxlxxv 4.
Cant ii 14 v.
3 Is. xliii 5
Jer. xlii 33
xxviii 38 Ex
xxix 22 Zech
xii 9 Mal. iiii.
17 John xvii. 9.
10 1 Cor vi.
20 1 Th. ii 14
1 Pet iii 9, 10
r xvi 17. Ps.
cxliii 12 Dan.
30 25 28. vi
16 20 John xii
13 Rom. i 19
vi 22 2 Tim i
3 v 14 Tit 1.
r xviii 9 10 Gen.
xvi 1 xlixi. 3
1 Kings xxi 13
2 Kings vi 16
Is. xli 10-14
xlii 1-5 Matt.
x 20 Rev i 17.
tik 15. xix 21. xxiii 11 xxv 11. Matt x 15 John xi 9 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17. Rev. xi. 5-7.
u 37 Gen xii 2. xviii. 23-32. xix. 29 xxx 27 xxxix 5. 23 Is. lviii. 11, 12. Mic. v.
7 Jam v. 16 ——— 11 21 Num xxiii. 19. 2 Chr xx 20. Luke i 45 2 Tim. i 12.
y xxviii 1. ——— 2 16-20.

a 30. 1 Kings ix
27 Jon. 1 6.
Rev. xviii. 17.
b 17. 41
c 30 40 Heb. vi.
d Deut. xxvii. 67.
Ps. cxlxx. 6.
e 16. 22
f 41
g 41
h 22-24 Ps xci.
11, 12 Jer. xxxix.
11-15 Ez.
xxxvi 36. 37
i Luke i 24 35
iv 9-12 John
vi 37. 2 Thea.
ii 13. 14.
i Luke xvi. 8
Phil iii. 7-9

k 20.

33 And ^k while the day was coming on, Paul besought *them* all to take meat, saying, 'This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.'

l 27.

34 Wherefore I pray you to take *some* meat; ^m for this is for your health: ⁿ for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

m Mark viii. 2, 3.
Phil. i. 5. 1
Tim. v. 23.
n 1 Kings i. 52
Matt. x. 30
Luko. xii. 7.
xxii. 38.

35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, ^o and gave thanks to God ^p in presence of them all; and when he had broken *it*, he began to eat.

o ii. 46. 27. 1 Sam.
iv. 13. Matt. x.
26. Mark viii. 6.
Luko. xxiv. 30.
Johu vi. 11. 23.
Rom. xiv. 6. 1
Cor. x. 30. 31.
Tim. iv. 3. 4.
p Ps. cxix. 46.
Rom. i. 16. 2
Tim. i. 9. 12. 1
Pet. iv. 16.
q Prov. xxvii. 17.
2 Cor. i. 4-6.
r 24.

36 Then were ^a they all of good cheer, and they also took *some* meat.

r ii. 41. vii. 14.
Rom. xii. 1. 1
Pet. iii. 20.
t 18. 19. Joh. ii. 4.
Job. i. 5. Matt.
vi. 25. xvi. 25.
Heb. xii. 1.

37 And we were in all in the ship, ^a two hundred threescore and sixteen ^b souls.

38 And when they had eaten enough, ^c they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which

they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.

40 And when they had ^{*} taken up the anchors, they committed *themselves* into the sea, and loosed the rudder-bands, ^a and hoised up the main-sail to the wind, and made toward shore.

* Or, and when
chose they left
them in the sea.
Ac. xxv. 10.
Ula. xxxvii. 10.

41 And falling into a place where two seas met, ^{*} they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was ^y broken with the violence of the waves.

x 17. 25-27.

42 And ^z the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.

y 1 Kings xxi. 10.
2 Chr. xx. 25.
Ez. xxvii. 27.
34. 2 Cor. xii. 25.
26.
z Ps. lxxiv. 29.
Prov. xii. 18.
Ec. ix. 3. Mark.
xv. 15-20. Luko.
xxi. 1. 11.
37. 11. 31. xxvii.
10. 24. Prov.
xvi. 7.

43 But the centurion, ^a willing to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose, and commanded that they which could swim, should cast *themselves* first into the sea, and get to land:

44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on *broken pieces* of the ship. And so it came to pass, ^b that they escaped all safe to land.

b 22. 24. Ps. cxii.
30. Am. ix. 9.
Johu vi. 30. 40.
2 Cor. i. 8-10.
1 Pet. iv. 18.

'and therefore hath appointed that these mariners shall continue in the ship, if we will hope for safety.' (Bp. Hall.)

V. 33—38. Till day-light should make way for using proper means of preservation, the apostle showed the whole company that they might make a most important use of the time, by taking seasonable food. During a fortnight, the tremendous violence of the tempest had kept them from making any regular meal, or taking even needful sustenance; so that they were greatly weakened, not only by fatigue and terror, but also by want of food. This seems the most natural and obvious meaning of the language here used, which was no doubt in some degree hyperbolical; but some think that they had been put on short allowance, as the voyage was likely to be much longer than had been expected. St. Paul, therefore, whose influence must have continually increased, urged them to take some refreshment, that they might be strengthened for the arduous struggle, which would be necessary in order to their deliverance from such perilous circumstances; and that their health might not be impaired, seeing that God would certainly preserve their lives. Having therefore, with all the boldness and confidence arising from a clear conscience, and a well grounded hope in God, given thanks to him, in the most public manner, for the food afforded them, and the promise vouchsafed them, he, by his own example, led them to take a regular and cheerful meal; and as a few hours must now terminate their perils, they cast the remainder of their provisions, as well as of the lading, (for probably the ship was freighted with wheat,) into the sea, as a measure conducive to the preservation of their lives.

V. 39. *Creek, &c.* The island, on which the ship

was wrecked, is known to be almost surrounded with rocks. But the mariners discovered a *bay* of the sea running up a little way within land, where was a *beach*, or convenient landing place; and thither they endeavoured to steer the vessel. Had these things been left to landmen, the ship must in all probability have been dashed to pieces on the rocks, and the lives of the passengers could not have been preserved, without the most evident and extraordinary miraculous interposition.

V. 40. *Taken up, &c.* Or, as some think, cut the cables and left the anchors. *Rudder-bands.* It is probable that the rudders were made fast during the tempest, to prevent injury to those on board by their useless and vehement motion; but at this crisis they were loosened as it was hoped some use might be made of them in steering the ship. Learned men have shown, that it was not uncommon among the ancients to have two rudders, one on each side of the ship.

V. 41. *Two, &c.* A point of land, or a sand-bank ending in a point from the shore, divided the channel in the midst, on each side of which was deep water. On this point, which had not been perceived, the ship was forcibly driven and immovably fixed, and thus was soon dashed to pieces by the fury of the waves.

V. 42—44. The soldiers, now perceiving that all must shift for themselves, and supposing that if any of the prisoners escaped, the survivors of them would be called to account for it, they advised the immediate execution of them all, though yet uncondemned. This could not have been thought of, had not the laws allowed it, or had it not been sometimes done. So that this cruel and unfeeling policy disgraced the jurisprudence of the renowned Romans! Indeed, the centurion seems not to have been at all

CHAP. XXVIII.

The whole company, having escaped to the island Melita, are humanely entertained by the inhabitants, 1, 2. A viper fastens on Paul's hand, but does not hurt him; and the people who at first supposed he was a murderer, believe that he is a god, 3—6. Publius, the chief man of the island, entertains them all three days; Paul heals his father and many other sick persons; and they meet with much respect and kindness, 7—10. Paul and his company depart; and being arrived within some miles

of Rome, they are met by brethren from that city, 11—15. Paul is introduced to a soldier, and dwells in his own lodging, 16. He sends for the chief of the Jews, and shows them the occasion of his coming, 17—22. He proves to a large company, from the scriptures, that Jesus is the Christ, 23. Some believe, and others do not, 24. He solemnly warns the unbelievers, and shows that the Gentiles would receive his word, 25—29. He continues during two years, to preach the Gospel in his own hired house, without interruption, 30, 31.

shocked by the proposal, and was induced, rather by a regard to Paul, than by general principles either of humanity or justice, to negative the counsel; and this at a time too, when his own life, and that of the soldiers, were in as much peril, as the lives of the prisoners! Thus the apostle, in this respect also, proved a blessing to his companions in suffering; and, by the special interposition of Providence, every one of the numerous company got safe to shore. It is natural to suppose that these extraordinary incidents were over-ruled to the conversion and salvation of many of their souls.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—20.

The Lord provides kind friends and adequate consolations for his faithful servants, in all their multiplied and varied trials; and even such persons as might have been expected to be inimical to them, are sometimes induced to entreat them courteously, and to minister to their refreshment; nor shall these fail of receiving a suitable reward. Zealous and able ministers cannot, in any situation, be wholly excluded from usefulness; and the Lord often causes them to pass through troubles, to manifest the power of his consolations in supporting them, and the excellency of their principles and character, in order to excite the attention of the careless, ignorant, and prejudiced, to their example and instructions. Their admonitions, however, will generally be at first slighted, even by those worldly men who behave in a friendly manner; for, while persons of this description give them credit for good meaning, they generally have a very low opinion of their sagacity. Thus, in hopes of avoiding difficulties, or obtaining conveniences and advantages, the counsels of heavenly wisdom are slighted; and when Providence seems to favour men's carnal projects, they are sanguine in concluding that they have gained their purpose. But disobedience to the counsel and command of God will surely lead them into troubles and dangers; and the event will convince them, that their hopes were vain, and their conduct foolish. What labour do men employ, and what sacrifices do they readily make, in order to preserve their lives when in imminent danger! Yet how few are willing to labour, or to renounce temporal interest or pleasure, to escape impending and eternal destruction! Groundless

hopes are often succeeded by desponding fears; but when sinners renounce all hope of saving themselves, they are prepared to understand the word of God, and to trust in his free mercy through Jesus Christ.

V. 21—44.

It is an unspeakable advantage, when the distressed, and those who draw near to death, have some persons at hand to direct them to the true Foundation of hope, and Source of consolation; and opportunities of this kind should be diligently improved. (*Notes, Job xxxiii. 19—30.*) It may be proper to remind the afflicted, that they have brought their troubles on themselves, by neglecting good counsel, and breaking the commandments of God; but we must not fail also to encourage them to hope in his mercy, and in his gracious promises. "The Lord knoweth them 'that are his,'" and holy angels are ready to minister to them, wherever they go. If we can truly say, "His I am, and him I serve," the whole Scripture says to us, "Fear not;" and he frequently spares the lives, and saves the souls of others, for the sake, and in answer to the prayers, of his redeemed and devoted servants. So that they "are a blessing" to every family and neighbourhood in which they reside, and in all places to which they travel. —The comfort of God's precious promises cannot be enjoyed, without a believing dependence on them; and the fulfilment of them must be waited for, in a diligent attendance on the appointed means of grace. If he hath "chosen us in Christ" to eternal salvation, he hath also determined that we shall obtain it in the way of repentance, faith, prayer, watchfulness, and diligent persevering obedience: and it is the most fatal presumption to expect it in any other way. Men in general are so selfish, that they are disposed to provide for their own preservation, even by such measures as directly tend to the destruction of those with whom they are most intimately connected! No peril or sufferings can subdue human depravity; so that soldiers and sailors, who experience more hardships, dangers, and evident deliverances, than any other men, and who should be more careful to be always prepared for death and judgment, are too commonly peculiarly regardless of religion and morality! We must, however, endeavour to accommodate ourselves, as far as we conscientiously can, to those among whom we are placed; and to excite, encourage, and in-

xxviii 25, 44.
b.1. Rom. 1.14.
1 Cor. xii. 11.
Col. iii. 11.
c. Job xx. 3. Lev.
xix. 16. 34.
Prov. xxiv. 11.
12. Luke x. 30.
—2. Rom. ii.
14. 15. 27. Heb.
xiii. 2.
d. Ezra ii. 9. John
viii. 18. 2 Cor.
x. 27.
e. Job xx. 16. Is.
xxx. 6. xlii. 21.
18. 5.
Matt. iii. 7. xii.
24. xliii. 33.
f. 1. Am. v. 19. 2
Cor. vi. 2. xl. 33
22.
h. 5. Gen. iii. 1.
Is. xlii. 21. 22.
xliii. 20. Zeph.
iii. 15.
i. Luke xiii. 2. 4.
John ix. 1, 2.
k. Gen. iv. 8—11
Is. 5. 6. xlii. 21.
22. Num. xxi.
31—34. Prov.
xxviii. 17. 18.
xxv. 21. Matt.
xxiii. 25. xxvii.
23. Rev. xxi. 8.
Num. xxi. 6—9.
Ps. xci. 13.
Mark xvi. 18.
Luke x. 19.
John iii. 14, 15.
Rom. xvi. 20.
Rev. ix. 3, 4.

AND when they were escaped, then they knew that ^a the island was called Melita.

2 And the ^b barbarous people ^c shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, ^d because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there ^e came a viper out of the heat, ^f and fastened on his hand.

4 And when ^g the barbarians saw the venomous ^h beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, ⁱ No doubt this man is ^k a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and ^l felt no harm.

6 Howbeit they looked when he should

have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and ^m said that he was a god.

7 In the same quarters were possessions of ⁿ the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; ^o who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.

8 And it came to pass, that ^p the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and ^q prayed, and ^r laid his hands on him, ^s and healed him.

9 So when this was done, ^t others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed;

10 Who also ^u honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they ^v laded us with such things as were necessary..

struct them, by our example and conversation, to trust in the Lord, to thank him for all their comforts, to obey his commands, and to use the proper means of securing their own interest and happiness. The promises of God cannot be frustrated by the most formidable dangers, nor can his purposes be defeated by any endeavours of his creatures; it is therefore our part to attend on our present duty, and to leave events with him. All true believers will certainly obtain eternal life and happiness, even as this company obtained temporal deliverance. Their difficulties, perils, alarms, temptations, and distresses, may be many, and of various kinds. They will sometimes have such hair-breadth escapes, as to remind them of the apostle's words, "the righteous scarcely are saved," and their preservation and victories will be effected in different ways, beside and beyond their expectation. They will often, under dark and gloomy dispensations, be required to wait for some token of the Lord's favour, (when they have no light or comfort day after day,) with more earnestness than these mariners wished for the dawn. (Notes, Ps. cxxx.) It will, however, at length, so come to pass, that by one means or other, they will all escape safe to heaven, where mutual congratulations and admiring praises and thanksgivings will succeed their present trials and distresses, and will not be terminated or interrupted to all eternity..

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVIII. V. 1, 2. The small island of Melita, so called from the honey, (*mel*;) with which it abounds, lies to the south of Sicily. It is now called Malta; for many ages it belonged to the knights of Malta, and recent events have made its name familiar to most persons. Probably, it was planted by a colony of the Phœnicians, and so the inhabitants were called *barbarians* by the Greeks and Romans, who gave this name to all the west of the world. But the islanders were noted for their

humanity and kindness to strangers; and their conduct to the shipwrecked company, in their urgent distress, corresponded with that character. As they were all wet, cold, destitute, and almost ready to perish, they kindled a large fire in some place that was sheltered from the weather, which was cold and rainy, and there entertained and refreshed them.

V. 3—6. The apostle knew how to accommodate himself to any circumstances, and, as the situation of the company required it, he readily assisted in making the fire. But in doing this he was exposed to a more imminent danger, than that which he had just escaped. The bite of a viper was supposed to be fatal, and as this viper was irritated by the heat, it might have been expected that it would immediately bite him. When therefore the islanders, who had some general notions of a superior power engaged to punish atrocious criminals, saw this fierce and destructive animal fasten on his hand, they looked on him as a dead man; and, perceiving that he was a prisoner, they concluded that he had committed murder, and so had exposed himself to divine vengeance, and that he had escaped from the sea, only that he might be punished in a more exemplary manner. But when, after a considerable time, they saw that no harm followed, they ran into the opposite extreme, and concluded that he was one of their deities, thus become visible among them. They did not indeed at this time know any thing of the true God, whose invisible power had thus preserved the life of his servant, but the impression, which these events made on their minds, would conduce to render them afterwards more observant of his conversation and behaviour. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 7—10. 'No one will ever repent of having entertained a servant of God, however wretched and indigent.' (*Beza.*) Grotius has produced an ancient inscription, by which it appears, that the title of *πρωτος*, or chief, was given to the governor of this island, and so it is

y vi. 9 xxviii 6.

z Is xlv 20.
Jon 1 9 16.
1 Cor. viii 4.

11 ¶ And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, ^a whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days.

13 And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day ^a the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:

14 Where ^b we found brethren, ^c and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.

15 And from thence, ^d when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum and The Three Taverns; whom when Paul saw, ^e he thanked God, and took courage.

16 And when we came to ^f Rome, ^g the centurion delivered the prisoners to

the ^h captain of the guard: ⁱ but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself, with a soldier that kept him.

17 ¶ And it came to pass, that after three days, Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, ^k though I have committed nothing against the people or customs of our fathers, yet ^l was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

18 Who, ^m when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me.

19 But when the Jews spake against it, ⁿ I was constrained to appeal unto Cesar; ^o not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.

20 For ^p this cause therefore have I

xxviii 12.

b vii. 42, 47. xiv

1 xxi 4 7, 8.

P. xxix. 63.

2 Matt. x. 11.

c xx. 5 Gen vii

4 vii 10-12

d x. 25. xxi. 5

Ez. iv 11 John

xii 13 Rom xv

26. Gal iv 14.

F. xlv. 30. 3

3 John 8-9.

1 Cor. xii 21

2 Cor. i. 14

vii 3-7 Titus

iii. 7.

H. 10 xxvii 2

xlv. 21 xxvii

21 Rem. 1 7-

19. xv. 22-29

Rev. xvii 9 18

g xxviii. 3 31. 43.

h Gen xxxvi. 36.

2 Edges xxv 23.

Jer. xl 2

100. 31 xxv 23.

xxvii 1 1-20.

xxviii 21-29.

k xxvii. 1. Ec.

xxiv 10 - 16.

xxv 8 10 Gen.

xi. 15.

1 xxi. 33 xxvii.

33.

m xxii 21 25 30.

xxiv. 10 22.

xxv 7, 8. xxvii.

31.

n xxv. 10-12 21

25 xxvi. 32

o Rom. xii 19-

21. 1 Pet. ii 22,

23.

p 17 x. 23. 35.

'used here by St. Luke, with his usual propriety of 'expression.' (*Doddridge*.) It had been providentially ordered, that the ship should be wrecked near the house and estate of the governor, who courteously entertained the whole company three days, till they could be conveniently accommodated elsewhere. Thus Paul became acquainted with the sickness of the governor's father, who was confined by a most painful and dangerous disease; and when he had prayed for him, and laid his hands on him, he was immediately healed. This would prove a very acceptable return to Publius for his liberal courtesy, and also serve to excite general attention to the apostle and his instructions. Accordingly, sick persons from every part of the island were brought to him, and were healed. No doubt Paul and his companions zealously improved these opportunities of preaching the Gospel; and, probably, they had considerable success during the three months of their continuance in the island. (11.) So that at length they were greatly honoured, as highly favoured by the Lord, and as having abundantly requited the kindness shown them. The whole company were treated with respect, chiefly on the apostle's account, and all their wants were liberally supplied when they departed. It is however reasonable to conclude from this compendious narrative, that the conduct and discourses of St. Paul and his friends, and all the events of the shipwreck and deliverance, had made a deep impression on the minds of the soldiers, sailors, and passengers, and that they too had behaved so well at Melita, as to conciliate the esteem and favour of the inhabitants.

V. 11-14. When the winter was over, the centurion and his soldiers, and the prisoners, with their companions, embarked as passengers on board an Alexandrian vessel. Castor and Pollux, according to the heathen fables, were twin sons of Jupiter by Leda; and, as a kind of deities, were supposed to be concerned in the protection of mariners. The images, therefore, of these brothers were

placed at the head or the stern of the ship, or as some think on both. The apostle had no option, whether he would sail in a ship thus stamped by idolatry; but it is probable that most ships were, in one way or other, in a similar situation, and, as merely a passenger, he would not have regarded it, had he been at liberty. Syracuse was the capital city of Sicily, Rhegium was a town on the southern extremity of Italy, and Puteoli a sea-port on the south-west side of it. At Puteoli the company landed; and finding some Christians, the apostle and his friends were desired by them, and allowed by the centurion, to spend a week with them. The centurion's regard to Paul evidently increased during the whole voyage, but it is not said whether he became a Christian, or not.

V. 15. 'The apostle's approach towards Rome being known in that city, some of the Christians, there residing, came to meet and welcome him, though in bonds. They knew him, especially, as the apostle of the Gentiles, and the epistle, which he had some time before written to them, had no doubt impressed them with the highest veneration for his character. Appii Forum is computed to have been fifty-one miles from Rome, and The Three Taverns thirty-three. This testimony of respect appears to have been very reasonable, for the circumstances in which the apostle was about to make his first visit to this renowned city, compared with the expectations which he had before expressed, concerning visiting the Church there, were suited to damp his hopes of being countenanced or made useful; but this promising appearance inspired him with gratitude and confidence. (*Marg. Ref.*)

V. 16. When the company arrived at Rome, the other prisoners were committed to the custody of the imperial guards, to be lodged in prison; but through the account sent by Festus, and the report of Julius, Paul was exempted from this hardship, and was allowed to dwell in a lodging apart from other prisoners, and only guarded by a soldier, to whom it is supposed he was chained.

called for you, to see *you*, and to speak with *you*: because that ^a for the hope of Israel I am bound with ^r this chain.

21 And they said unto him, ^e We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee.

22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: ^t for as concerning this ^u sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.

23 ¶ And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into *his* lodging; to whom ^v he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, ^w both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, ^x from morning till evening.

24 And ^y some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

25 And when they ^z agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, ^a Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

26 Saying, ^d Go unto this people, and say, ^e Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:

27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

28 Be ^f it known therefore unto you, that ^g the salvation of God is ^h sent unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it.

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had ⁱ great reasoning among themselves.

30 ¶ And Paul dwelt ^k two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,

31 ^l Preaching the kingdom of God, ^m and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁿ with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

q xxiii. 6. xxvii. 13. See on xxvii. 6. 7. xxviii. 20. Eph. iii. 1. iv. 1. v. 20. Phil. i. 13. Col. 1. 18. 2 Tim. i. 16. ii. 9. 1. Phil. 10. 1. 2. xi. 7. 13. xli. 11. 1. 8. iv. 17.

t xxi. 20, 21. xxvii. 6. 7. xxviii. 5, 6. 1. Luke xxi. 1. 1. Pet. ii. 12. iii. 16. iv. 14-16. v. 17. xv. 5. xvi. 5. 1 Cor. xii. 19. Marg.

x xxvii. 2, 3. xxviii. 4. 20. xix. 8. xxvii. 22, 23.

y See on xxvi. 6. 22. Luke xxiv. 26, 27. 44. 2. xx. 9-11. John iv. 34.

a xiii. 48. - 50. 5. xiv. 6-8. xvi. 8, 9. Rom. iii. 3. xl. 4-6. b 50.

c Matt. xv. 7. Mark xvi. 6. 2. Pet. i. 21.

d Is. vi. 9. 10. Matt. xiii. 12. 15. Mark iv. 12. Luke viii. 10. John vi. 40. 41. 46. 47. 48. Rom. xi. 4-10. e Deut. xxix. 4. Ps. lxxxi. 12. Is. xlv. 10. 14. Jer. xiv. 17. 20. 21. Mark viii. 17, 18. Lu. e. xxiv. 25. 40. 2 Cor. iv. 4-6.

f ii. 14. iv. 10. xli. 30. Ez. xxxvi. 32. g Is. xlviii. 2, 3. Jer. xli. 1. 2. 3. 10. Lam. iii. 28. Luke ii. 30-32. h i. 6. li. 13. xlii. 45. 47. xiv. 27. xv. 14. 17. xvi. 6. xlii. 21. xxvii. 17. 18. Matt. xxi. 41 - 43. Rom. iii. 29, 30. iv. 11. xi. 11. xv. 8-16. i 25. Matt. x. 34. - 36. Luke xli. 21 - 23. John xii. 40-53. k 16.

l A. D. 63. 123. viii. 12. xxv. 25. Matt. iv. 23. Mark. i. 14. Luke. viii. 1. m v. 42. xlii. 11. n iv. 29. 31. Eph. i. 13. Col. iv. 3. 4. 2 Tim. iv. 17.

V. 17.—20. 'Paul every where remembers that he is 'an apostle.' (*Beza.*) When he and his friends had arranged their private concerns, he lost no time in sending for the principal persons of the nation to come to him, as he could not go to them; and, when they were come, he stated to them, that though he had not injured any of his people, or committed any offence against their laws and customs, yet he had been apprehended at Jerusalem, and delivered as a criminal into the hands of the Romans, and at length had been constrained in his own defence to appeal to the emperor. In this statement, he carefully avoided all mention of the violent attempt which had been made on his life, and the subsequent plots which had been formed to assassinate him. He desired to satisfy his countrymen, that he had no ill will to his nation, or resentments against individuals, or intention of accusing them before the Romans. It was, however, a fact, that he had not committed any crime, for which he should be thus prosecuted, but that he was a prisoner entirely on account of professing that hope in the Messiah, which was common to the nation, only that he held it with respect to Jesus, who had been crucified, and was risen from the dead. His address was the language of candour, caution, and benevolence; and he spake of his chain with great indifference, being willing to wear it for Christ's sake. (*Notes, Gen. xl.*)

V. 21, 22. The Jews replied to the apostle, that they had received no account of him from Judea, nor had they heard any of those who came to Rome accuse him of any crime, but they desired to hear his sentiments concerning Jesus, seeing the *sect* or *heresy*, of the Christians was every where spoken against, as destructive of the religion

of their ancestors, the source of many disorders, and injurious to mankind. This answer shows, that the Jews despaired of success in following up their accusations at Rome; and that immense pains had been taken to misrepresent the Christians in every part of the world.

V. 23.—29. The apostle proceeded in the same manner with the Jews in his lodgings, as he had before done in the synagogue, explaining the nature and privileges of the Redeemer's kingdom and salvation; testifying to the facts by which it was introduced, proving from the Scriptures of the prophets, that Jesus was the promised Messiah, and persuading them to believe in him. Thus in the earnestness of his zealous and benevolent soul, he spent the whole day; and though some were won over to the faith, yet it appears, that most present rejected his testimony, and even disputed against such as believed. Therefore the apostle parted from them, by observing that the Holy Spirit had well described their disposition, and awfully denounced their doom, by the prophet Isaiah. The passage hath already been considered; (*Notes, &c. Is. vi. 9—11.*) St. Paul had observed, during the whole of his ministry, that the nation in general thus closed their eyes and ears to the truth, and he foresaw, with great concern, that God was about to give them up to *judicial* blindness and obduracy for their sins. He would, however, assure them, that the Gentiles, to whom the salvation of God was sent by him, would hear and obey his word. The Jews, being thus warned when departing, had much reasoning and disputation among themselves in consequence of what they had heard, and probably afterwards some of them embraced the Gospel.

V. 30, 31. The Jewish rulers did not follow up their

prosecution of Paul, on his appeal to the emperor, who took no farther notice of the matter: thus the apostle remained two years longer a prisoner at Rome. He was, however, allowed to hire a house, and there openly to exercise his ministry, without meeting with the least interruption, which shows, that Nero's persecution was not begun at this time. With this Luke closed his history: probably the apostle was soon after set at liberty: though it is generally agreed that he afterwards suffered martyrdom at Rome. Doubtless Luke, Aristarchus, and others who attended on the apostle, or came to him, laboured diligently to spread the Gospel in the city and its vicinity, during all the time of the apostle's confinement; though the historian, by a modesty almost unprecedented, is wholly silent concerning his own labours and sufferings. Several of St. Paul's epistles were written during this imprisonment.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-10.

They who are despised for their homely uncultivated manners, are often more hospitable and friendly than their more polished neighbours: and *heathens*, or reputed *barbarians*, will rise up in judgment against many persons, in this *civilized Christian* nation, who do not scruple to embezzle the property, or injure the persons, of such as are cast upon our shores. True dignity has no need of affected stateliness; and only pride or sloth deems that beneath it, which the present exigency requires for personal or social advantage. We are always in danger in ourselves, and always safe when under God's protection: and he leads his servants through perils, to illustrate their characters, or to show his power in their deliverance. Even uninformed and barbarous people have a horror of murder, and an apprehension of divine vengeance on those who commit it: but this may give rise to erroneous judgments; as it is not so generally considered, that the wicked are often reserved for future and more terrible punishment. They whose minds are destitute of due information, are peculiarly apt to pass from one extreme to the other; and to decide on men's characters rather by their success, than by their actions. The Lord raises up friends to his people in every place whither he leads them; he rewards, or enables them to requite, their benefactors in a suitable manner; and he renders them a blessing to all who are connected with them. The cure of diseases, though valuable, is far more so when united with the means of grace and salvation; and the friends, that are raised up to a pious man by his good behaviour and use-

fulness, will be above all others affectionate and liberal.

V. 11-31.

The ordinary transactions of travelling are seldom worth a recital: but the comfort of communion with the saints, and the kindness shown us by our friends, are deserving of a more particular mention. The respect and love that lively Christians bear to faithful ministers, even though they have never seen them, will induce them sometimes to go far to converse with them; nor should they esteem them the less on account of their sufferings for the Gospel. This conduct is the more incumbent upon them, as the most eminent servants of God are liable to discouragements, and need somewhat to refresh their hopes under long continued trials and temptations. The Lord moderates the afflictions of his people, as is best for them; and he can render them easy under their remaining troubles. They should therefore be prompt to every service in their power; they ought to obviate prejudices which hinder their usefulness, as far as they can; and in refuting the charges brought against them, they should be candid, and express good-will towards their enemies. Should we be called to wear a chain for Christ's sake, we ought not to be ashamed of it, but to glory in it; and though real Christians are every where, and at all times, spoken against, as a precise, troublesome, or fanatical sect, yet we may so behave, that none can speak any personal harm of us. We should ever be ready to declare our sentiments of Christ and the Gospel to those who desire to hear them; and if the audience did not grow weary, there are times when a zealous minister could expound, and testify the kingdom of God, and persuade men concerning Jesus, from morning till evening. Yet at last we must be thankful, if some believe, though still more reject our testimony with pertinacious contempt. But we must show such persons what the Holy Spirit hath spoken concerning them, and how the Scriptures are fulfilled in them; and warn them not to close their hearts in obstinate unbelief, lest God should *judicially* leave them to be blinded and hardened, to their destruction. Whilst we mourn on account of despisers, we should rejoice that the salvation of God is sent to others, who will receive it; and if we are of this number, how thankful should we be to him who hath made us to differ! If under reproach and persecution, the true minister can but obtain leave and liberty to preach the Gospel, and is favoured with success, he will think his sufferings amply compensated; and he will be reconciled to his own want of liberty, if he finds that "the word of God hath free course, and is glorified."

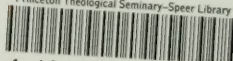
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